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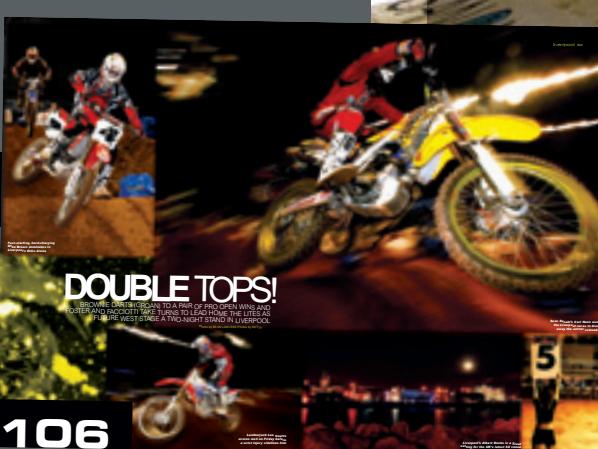
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March

2008

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A photograph of two women in a car at night. One woman is leaning out of the open driver-side door, her hand resting on the side of the car. The other woman is seated inside the car, looking out the window. The car is dark-colored with a red and blue light bar on the roof. The background shows a blurred city street with lights.

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COMMENT

MOTOCROSS, TRIALS, enduros – and any other deviation of two, three or four-wheeled dirt biking – are all sports that create heroes. There's something about the determination, skill and sheer bloody hard graft needed to make it to the top off-road that elevates star riders to a level far above mere mortals and – for me at least – most other professional sportsmen and women n'all. And it's not just getting to the top – it's staying there – so while the likes of Tommy Searle or the carrot-topped stripy horse slayer from the other side of the pond are heroes to some, for me they haven't been around for long enough or paid their dues sufficiently to be worthy of a shrine next to Elvis' in the corner of my bedroom.

Rick Stein had to travel around Britain to find his food heroes – all it took for me to find a few off-road heroes of my own was about 90 minutes in a van as Sutty lead-footed it down to Nantmawr Quarry for The Tough One, then another 45 minutes as he pointed the 115 Dualiner north to Liverpool's Echo Arena. For many the hero of the day at Nantmawr was young Michael Brown and to be fair to the Beta rider he rode out of his skin to win the Speed Trials event and then lead the biggie for the first hour. Still, I'd have to file Michael in the same drawer as Tommy Gun and Villopotato.

David Knight, however, is another matter. The big fella's been around for long enough not to be a flash in the pan and ticks all the right boxes in terms of skills, guts and championships won. The Dawg and I weren't the only people breaking the sound barrier to get up to Liverpool for some sizzling SX action – Gordon Crockard did his two hours in the saddle then raced a full evening's SX programme for the second time in two nights. In my book that's also the stuff of heroes – especially when you factor in his GP wins, British titles and that lovely early noughties Lazer Helmets ad! Gordy's off to the States now to race the GNCCs for BMW – let's hope his latest off-road adventure only serves to add to his hero status.

Growing up as a regular competitor in the hardcore world of schoolboy trials my very earliest role models tended to be granite-jawed Yorkshiremen or long-haired, 'flamboyant' Cumbrians. That all changed when I met Dave Thorpe at a two-day 'scramble' back in '78 and DT to this day is right up there in my own personal off-road pantheon.

Another hero of mine is Trampas Parker. I clearly remember him being cornered on the steps of his distinctly hippyish race transporter at Namur one year by a bunch of ever-so-slightly hammered MR Thumpercross riders who were keen to discuss the ins and outs of the new four-stroke technology. In his Deep South drawl Trampas was more than happy to shoot the sh*t with the glassy-eyed thumper fans but, to be honest, he'd been a hero of mine for a fair bit before this Jupiler-fuelled encounter. What did it for me with Trampas was the fact that he'd turned his back on all that 'USA! USA! USA!' crapola and was earning his living racing – and winning – in Europe. Sure, maybe he could make more money over here but he'd dispensed with all the Stars and Bars flag-waving and was keeping it real in Europe. He was one of 'us'!

All of which rambling rubbish brings me nicely to the subject of the third and final off-road hero I bumped into that busy Saturday. Mike Brown may have enjoyed more success in his native America than Trampas did but he's a man in very much the same vein. At 35 years of age Mike's like a hired gun – 'have boots, will travel' could be a suitable motto for the Tennessee native (maybe, like Trampas, it's a southern States kinda deal) – and he doesn't just roll up for an easy pay-day, he comes to race.

Finally, there's been a lot of wailing and gnashing of teeth in the DBR office this month for a couple of reasons. The first is the news that this is Sutty's last issue as Deputy Dawg (see story on p11). The second is that our planned jolly to the Belgian GP at Namur has had to be cancelled because – boo, hiss – they've only gone and moved it to Lommel. On the plus side it instantly removes the risk of the kind of beer injuries that can only be sustained by falling down big hills while under the influence. The downside is that Lommel just ain't Namur...

Sean



THUNDER DOME!

Future West series signs off at O2 Arena

SUPERCROSS IN the UK is on the verge of its biggest night ever as Future West gear up for the final round of the ACU-backed British SX Championship at the amazing O2 Arena in London.

The sport has been staged in the capital on a number of occasions – most recently at Earl's Court and the Docklands Arena – but the venue for the February 23 date in the former Millennium Dome surpasses anything and everything that's gone before.

On the track Mike Brown is sitting pretty at the top of the Pro Open standings with 72 points from a possible 75. Brownie's only defeat in the series

came at the first round in Sheffield at the hands of Jeff Alessi and with his nearest challenger, Canadian Jean Sebastien Roy, 13 points behind unless disaster strikes the CAS Honda man he'll be claiming the 2008 national crown.

In fact, the fiercest racing in the class is likely to be for third place with Welsh teenager Ashley Greedy currently filling the bottom step of the podium just four points ahead of Canadian Colton Facciotti. And South African Neville Bradshaw's also got a mathematical chance of leap-frogging the pair to claim the bronze at the end of the night.

Things are a lot tighter in the Pro Lites division

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The big guns of the GP world will be out in force at Hawkstone



Carl Nunn will be out on the Suso Suzuki at the O2 Arena

where Facciotti heads up a Canadian 1-2 with a three-point lead over JSR. Bradshaw's a further 14-points back so he's unlikely to move any higher and he's got Greedy hot on his heels a meagre five points behind.

Other SX stars looking to shine in London include Brit favourites Carl Nunn and Lewis Gregory, Canadians Kyle Beaton, Kris Foster and Lee Coutts, South African David Goosen and Norway's Per Kristian Bakke.

In the Clubman Open class Mark Atkinson's eight points clear of Danny

Blakely with Carl Jones another three points off the pace but Jones is in pole position to take the Clubman Lites title with a whopping 25 points lead over Harry Bertram.

As well as the four adult classes, spectators will be treated to an exciting series of head-to-head one-lap dashes plus a full programme of youth races. And lucky media types will get to meet the stunning Carly Rathmell (is that good enough a mention Carly)?...

For tickets call **0871 984 0002** and more info's available at www.fwsx.com

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Cover: Brad Anderson
disturbs rare nesting
birds – not! – for our
exclusive test shoot
(Sutton)
Contents: Chad Reed's
in the driving seat after
five rounds of the AMA
SX championship
(Frank Hoppen)

FIRST BLOOD!

It's that time of year when the world's best MX racers head to Hawkstone for the only pre-season race that matters

THE BIGGEST and best pre-season race on the face of the planet takes place on March 2 when the Hawkstone Park International celebrates its 10th birthday with an entry list that reads like a who's who of grand prix MX.

The MX1 class promises to be a reet bobby dazzling clash of the Titans with 2007 world champion Steve Ramon on the factory Suzuki lining up against former British champ and factory Yamaha rider Josh Coppins, the man who for so long lead last year's GP series until injury put him out of the title chase.

Home favourite Billy MacKenzie will make his UK debut for the CAS Honda team at Hawkstone and the winner of last season's Japanese GP will be looking to impress first time out on home soil. The man Billiam replaced at CAS – Ramon's team-mate Ken De Dycker – is another confirmed entry in a field that also numbers the likes of Tanel Leok, David Philippaerts, Julien Bill, Max Nagl and Dutch sand specialist Marc De Reuver.

Other big guns being wheeled out in MX1 include CAS Honda's MX2 British champion Mike Brown with former CAS rider Yoshi Atsuta flying in from Japan for a one-off race. Another popular Brit looking to start 2008 with a bang will be Tom Church who makes his MX1 debut at the famous Salop venue for the Molson Kawasaki team. Add to that the Swift Suzuki pairing of Brad Anderson and Pascal Leuret and you've got a stellar field that will fill most of the gate at the first GP of the season a month later at Valkenswaard.

And the talent's almost as thick down in MX2 where world #2 Tommy Searle will go head-to-head with his factory KTM team-mates Tyla Rattray and Rui Goncalves. That's not to say the winner's going to be racing an orange bike and British hopes also lie with Molson Kawasaki's Stephen Sword and Gareth Swanepoel plus Swift Suzuki's young pups Elliot Banks-Browne and the Reverend Jake Nicholls and PAR Homes Honda's exciting young Welshman Ashley Greedy.

For ticket prices, race times and other general info call **0161 705 2280** or hook up to www.hawkstonemx.co.uk and also keep an eye on www.dirtbikerider.com for the latest news including more star signings as and when they're announced.

DAWG GONE!

Sutton says 'see ya'

AFTER FIVE years as a fully paid-up member of Team DBR, Deputy Dawger Anthony Sutton's decided the time's come to stretch his wings and fly the nest.

A hardened warrior with both a keyboard and camera as well as a demon on a motocrosser and a comedian on a trials iron, Sutton's going to be handling the press at GPs for the factory Kawasaki and Suzuki teams. It goes without saying (but we'll say it anyway) that we're all going to miss the big galoot up here in sun-kissed Morecambe and wish him the very best of luck in the future. Sniff.

But life goes on, as one door closes another one opens and there are plenty more fish in the sea so all things considered and looking on the bright side we're after a new production editor to fill Tanky's size 12s. Ideally we'd like someone – male, female or even gender confused – with an extensive vocabulary of clichés, finely-crafted literary skills, Ray Archer's touch with a camera, an encyclopaedic knowledge of dirt bikes and the two-wheeled talent of a GP/WTC/WEC competitor.

Failing that, the ability to read, write, take snaps and a sense of balance and rudimentary throttle control would be good. As would a sense of humour and a full driving licence.

If you think you've got what it takes to be DBR's next Production Editor turn to page 114 for full details.

WIN! WIN! WIN!

Relentless CTi custom braces up for grabs

YOU'D NEVER take to the mean streets of Morecambe after midnight without a baseball bat and a couple of beefy mates so why would you consider rolling up behind the startgate with your oh-so vulnerable knees unprotected?

In the world of knee braces CTi are the undisputed daddies and we've teamed up with **Technology in Motion** to offer one very, very lucky reader a pair of **Relentless CTi** custom braces worth a whopping £1600.

And that's not all! The winner of our fabulous three-part competition will also win a training day for themselves and a bosom buddy (you'll need your own bikes and kit) with **Rob Hooper's Relentless Suzuki team** plus a case of **24** cans of the fabulous, fizzy energy drink.

Second prize is a training day for two with **Hooper's heroes** (again, bring your own bikes and clobber) plus a case of **Relentless** and the third-placed entry gets two tickets to a **Maxxis British MX** Championship round with hospitality courtesy of **Rob** plus a case of **Relentless**. On top of all that a further **10 runners** up will get – yep, you guessed it – a case of **Relentless** each!

And as an added bonus, **DBR** will cover the training day so the top two entrants will get to see their ugly mugs appearing in Britain's favourite dirt bike mag!

To be in with a chance of winning you need to know the correct answer to last month's question and the correct answer to this month's question and then stay tuned and hope you know the correct answer to the final question in our April-dated issue. Phew! That's a lot of questions! And correct answers!

Q2: Name the three pro riders racing for Rob Hooper's Relentless Suzuki in 2008...

- A) Kelly Swanson, Craig Pratley, Matt Bates
- B) Jamie Law, Lewis Gregory, Scott Probert
- C) Ricky Carmichael, Ivan Tedesco, Johnny May
- D) Roger De Coster, Joel Robert, Pedro Tragter

Think you know the answer? Okay, write it down and keep it with the answer to question #1. Once you've got the answer to question #3 send them all in together along with your name, address and a daytime contact number on the back of a postcard or sealed envelope to us at 'CTi comp', **DBR, 12 Victoria Street, Morecambe LA4 4AG**.

Alternatively, hook up to www.dirtbikerider.com and follow the competition link. Entries close on **March 31** with the first correct entries drawn totally at random getting the swag.

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Tanky's Tom busts a Weston dune

LOONY DUNES!

Tanky's terrors take on Le Touquet

WHAT IS it about beach races that make riders want to break on through the pain barrier in the name of charity? Foolishness? A weird love of pain? Maybe even a big dose of altruism?

But putting slightly masochistic tendencies to one side, the selfless actions of these brave men – and women – raise a lot of money each year for some very worthy causes and give dirt bikers a bit of positive PR into the bargain. It's a win win thing!

One group of fine upstanding citizens who've so far raised £5,000 for Cancer Research Wales are Tanky's Dune Busters – a collective of Welsh off-roaders (think more Llazin' Squad than Blazing Squad) who fielded 25 riders at Weston and followed this up with a six-strong assault on Le Touquet earlier this month.

"As usual with us Welsh idiots there's numerous quantities of alcohol involved," explains Stuart 'The Legend' Davies, "and this whole project is treated as a bit of fun but with a serious message."

Their French foray didn't fare so well and only two of Tanky's Taffia – Darren 'Doo Dar' Jones and Adam Housley – made it to the finish after the rest of the team were hit with mechanical disasters. Phillip 'Sleepy' Britten gets a special mention in dispatches after his charge was halted by 'water problems' – whether these were down to drowning, coolant loss or incontinence isn't explained.

For more details and to make a donation to a very worth cause check out the website at www.tankysdunebusters.co.uk



FULL FOCUS!

PUB QUIZZES, FRIENDSHIPS, DBR COLUMNS – POSSIBLY EVEN PERSONAL HYGIENE. EVERYTHING'S PLAYING SECOND FIDDLE TO GORDY'S GNCC PREPARATIONS...

WORDS BY GORDON CROCKARD PHOTO BY SUTTY

FLAT-OUT IS how my life feels today. All I want to do is practice on my bike and push out big motos to replicate the GNCC three-hour races that I'll be doing in a couple of weeks. My first race is on March 4 and the pressure is building to be ready on time.

All I can do is my best at the end of the day but I'm so focussed on doing good that my single mindedness is causing me to neglect other things I also have to take care of apart from practice, practice, practice. Anything that I have to donate time to which in my eyes isn't going to increase my chances of success in the races I see as a complete inconvenience and therefore not welcome in my day and I have witnesses to the fact I'm not too sociable around other humans these days.

Last Tuesday I went to a pub quiz in Donaghadee after riding all day. My body was in the pub but my mind was still at the track trying to think of ways to improve. The rest of the quiz team weren't too impressed and didn't even ask me to go this week – good job because I'm stuck at my desk writing this column at 10pm. Thankfully the DBR editor is extremely patient and accepts I push the limits with making the deadline for printing. Cheers Sean! Not wanting to bite the hand that feeds me too much but I'd even consider the time I'm giving now to write this a hassle. I could be out in the workshop changing my back tyre for tomorrow's practice.

Evenings are a busy time at the moment as they're when I communicate with the BMW team in America. They are five to eight hours behind so late on is the only time I can get talking to them and as I've got all my work visa and legal admin paperwork to complete with them it's important stuff.

I plan to go there in the next few weeks and won't return until July when there's a two-month summer break in the GNCC calendar as it's way too dangerous to compete in the very hot temperatures they experience then. For me it's a cool schedule – five months in the USA, home for July and August and then back to the USA for September and October. There are a total of 13 GNCC rounds and I'll try to compete in as many indoor endurocross events as I can. I want to ride all the extreme races too like Erzberg in Austria and the Last Man Standing in Texas. These will be great fun – bonus events really for the craic – although if I do contest them I'll take them seriously but all the time bear in mind that the GNCC is my priority.

I'm going to Malaga in Spain to meet with the BMW factory WEC team on Sunday. I'll stay and test for 10 days with them and also test suspension with Ohlins. This will be a great chance to check out what the WEC men are doing with their BMWs and we can discuss set-up and learn from each other. My set-up will be slightly different in some areas but I reckon I can learn a lot of info from them. And I'm looking forward to better weather if nothing else!

This weekend I'm going to do a local XC race here in Northern Ireland. It's two hours in duration and over a mountain where trials competitions are normally run. It should be good practice and a change of terrain to what I've been doing my practice on up to now. Plenty of passing hopefully too which will warm me up for the congestion that occurs in GNCC. I did a one-hour sprint mountain bike race last weekend which was rough on the lungs and the legs but a fun way to train. I wasn't too bothered about the result (I was 11th), just more interested in the quality of the training!

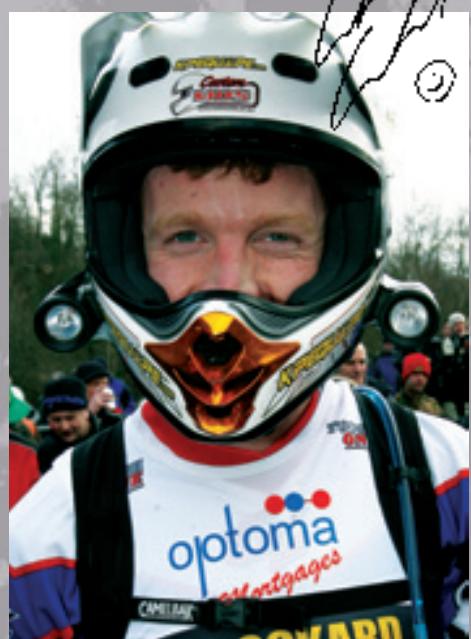
Just after Christmas I went to Dortmund and rode the supercross for the Waldman Honda team. Mike Brown was my team-mate and he ran out overall winner

after the three nights. My highlight was a fourth on the Friday night – I was half dead with flu so I'm surprised I didn't come home in a body bag.

I also rode at the Liverpool SX on a Gavin Boyd Building Honda and had a fourth on the Friday night. I wasn't pleased with that as I felt a little robbed due to a Canadian dude falling in front of me making me fall and putting me at the back of the pack. The next day I rode an extreme enduro in Wales called The Tough One and finished eighth. I did this on a Gas Gas 300cc two-stroke – a machine I'd never ridden before. I'd do many dramas in the race I couldn't begin to tell you in this monthly column alone but I can say that the bike was great thanks to Gas Gas' John Shirt Jnr and superbly prepared and repaired by magic mechanic Steve Plain. My lights were also the business thanks to Steve and Trail Tech. The race finished at around 5.45pm and I managed to make it up to Liverpool – still sweating – for the opening ceremony of the second night's SX where I got third in the Pro Open final.

Tall TM rider Euan McConnell from Scotland was over in Northern Ireland doing some engineering work for Shorts/Bombardier on the Airbus aeroplanes. He had a few spare days to kill so we went out practising. We had a good time and I enjoyed his company on and off the track.

I had tried to get a ride at the FIM World Indoor Endurocross in Genoa but I was too late at pushing for an entry. I watched it on TV and was pleased and raged at the same time to see Antoine Meo, an ex GP motocrosser, win the final. That could have been me I thought! I also watched the French beach race at Le Touquet on the telly and was horrified to see the guy Schots crash his brains out on the first lap – I hope he's okay as it was a terrible crash. The boyo on the road bike hybrid motocrosser was the holeshot king for sure. Very funny to see. And the last lap take-out under the bridge was brilliant. Only Demeester and Potisek will ever know what really happened...



WAYNE'S WORLD

HE'S THE reigning Hell's Gate champ so Wayne Braybrook knows a thing or two about off-road racing and now the big man's teamed up with Justin Wilson to run a series of multi-lap events aimed specifically at Clubmen and Sportsmen riders.

Under the Ride Off-Road UK banner, Wayne and Justin are planning an 11-round championship based in the north of England kicking off with an event at Abram, Wigan, on March 9. ACU licences will be required for the two-and-a-half hour races and entries will be limited to 200 riders per event.

The www.rideoffroaduk.co.uk will go live soon but in the meantime more details including dates and venues are available by calling 07847 162525.



PIECE OF CAKE!

Knighter easily wraps up the Indoor Enduro World Cup title in Genoa

MANXMAN-OF-STEEL David Knight secures the 2007-'08 Indoor Enduro World Cup title with a storming second place at the third and final round of the series held at Genoa in Italy.

Finishing second on the night behind ex-MXGP ace Antoine Meo, the KTM star wraps up the title easily as his closest rival in the championship – Mika Ahola – fails to make the Main Event.

Qualifying three seconds faster than anyone else in the timed qualifying sessions, Knighter makes a hash of his qualifier finishing sixth but transfers to the main by virtue of winning the last chance

qualifier with KTM team-mate Taddy Blazusiak in tow. With Ahola out of the points-paying Main Knighter knows he only has to finish seventh or better in the six-lap final to take the crown but ploughs through the pack from a poor start to challenge Meo for the win – going bar-to-bar with the Frenchman in the water section – before just dipping out after losing vital traction.

Knighter's still pumped though and after winning four major titles in the last 12 months he has every right to be.

"Winning the Indoor Enduro World Cup as well as

the GNCC, Aussie four-day and the Endurocross championships, well, it's great," reckons the mighty, meaty man from Man (Isle of). "It was tough though tonight. There was one rock on the last lap that I thought was going to take the chain off so I was a bit lucky there. It's hard when there is a lot of pressure on you and I made things harder by messing up my heat race."

Taking full advantage of Ahola's non-qualification, Taddy B secures second in the series making it a KTM 1-2 by edging out the unlucky Honda-mounted Finn by a single point.

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And even better – you don't have to be an established dirt legend to get hooked up as instead of spending a year's budget on one guy they are looking for a few talented individuals currently excelling at club level who need a little help as they improve.

Different support packages ranging from a full head-to-toe deal for free to heavy discounts have been put in place to help riders on their way. They are only accepting written CVs so get on the computer or even write the thing out by hand – just make sure you put in there what you can offer a sponsor and all the relevant information about your riding.

There is a cut-off point – March 15 to be precise – so get busy and get those CVs off to the good doctor at PO Box 709, Worcester WR2 5UQ. For more details check out www.docwob.com

DATE CLASH!

WOMEN'S RACES are few and far between so the potential clash between the super-popular Girls National and the second and final round of the newly-expanded ACU British Ladies' MX champs has got more than a few pairs of knickers in twists.

Bad jokes aside, it is great news that fast females are being better catered for this year but – as Welsh racer Louise Sheppard points out – dividing the entry doesn't do anyone any favours.

The '07 Girls National attracted a whopping 180 riders and organisers were hoping for more of the same this year over the weekend of August 30/31. But as it currently stands the ACU's ladies' series will be staged at the first and final rounds of the MMX champs so after kicking off at Matchams on February 24 it concludes at Cusses Gorse, Wiltshire, on August 30.

"The way it stands neither event will get a good turn-out because it will be divided. Then next year it could go back to one round or one day because there weren't enough entries," says Louise who is rallying support through www.ladies-womens-girls-motocross.com

"I think all the organisers are seeing the need for more women's events and that's great because I don't think people realise how many of us girl riders there are. There may only be two or three riders in most clubs but put them all together and we could have a good championship."

The good news is that organisers are working behind the scenes to rearrange dates so watch this space.

For more details of the ACU series contact the MX dept on 01788 566422/566404 or email moto.cross@acu.org.uk and for Girls National updates we recommend you hook up to www.ukgirlsnational.co.uk

STEPHEN SWORD

TESTING TIMES!

APART FROM THE ODD SUNDAY ROAST THERE'S NO TIME TO RELAX AS SWORDY GETS SET FOR THE SEASON AHEAD...

WORDS BY STEVIE SWORD PHOTO BY JP O'CONNELL

THE RACE season is almost upon us and all that hard training and riding over the winter will soon be put to the test. As the saying goes, 'when the gate drops the bulls**t stops'.

My pre-season testing is going well. We were in the South of France two weeks ago – TC and I flew down where we were met by our mechanics Adam (how's your leg?) and Ryan. Fred, Mike, plus Willy our suspension guy were also there.

We stayed at Fred's house for the week – he rents an apartment on the side of Antoine Meo's parent's house. It is like a big farm but French style, a cool place with a nice practice track in the back garden. We had a good week and tested many things with the engine and suspension along with some other small parts. The tracks we rode on were awesome – all hardpack and good for testing – and the weather was perfect, about 18 degrees and sunny. I was happy with my set-up and with a couple more tests scheduled before the season starts things are looking good.

Apart from being away in France I have been riding and training mainly in England. The tracks over here have been in good condition which always helps. A little bit cold some days but that toughens you up ready for the season. There was one week that we had lots of rain so I popped over to Dunkirk for three days riding. It's deep sand and you can always ride there no matter what the weather's doing. DT came as well and Ryan – who is now over in Belgium at the team workshop – met us there too.

My first race of this year will be the international at Valance on February 24. The week leading up to Valance I have to go to Spain where the Kawasaki team launch is being held. All the Kawasaki teams will be down there, not just us. Some press will be there taking photos and doing interviews – the photos they take are normally the ones we use for our posters and the team use them for their press packs which they give to sponsors. It is a week where everyone prays for good weather so we get the best shots possible.

After Valance I head home to get ready for the Hawkstone Park International. I haven't really been getting up to much else lately. My week is taken up with riding and training but I have Sundays off. Saturday nights Jodie and I usually go out either for some food or to the cinema. I have to catch an early film – anything that starts after 8pm and you'll see me snoring in the back row. I get an elbow in the ribs from Jodie if that happens. We make the most of our Sundays at the moment by having a good old roast. Once the racing starts

there's not many Sundays free so I have to get them while I can.

I'm not too good when it comes to relaxing but a nice roast and a bit of football on Sky TV always kills a few hours. I like to follow football. Saying that, I have an interest in most sports. I'm always flicking through the sports channels on telly mainly to look for motocross but if there is none on I'll normally see what football's on. I'm a Manchester United fan – I've probably just lost a few readers now. No, I am not a glory hunter either – I've been supporting them since I was about 10. I just follow them on the TV or in the papers, I have been to a few games but motocross takes up most of my time full stop. Plus it's not that close for me to pop up to Manchester.

I used to play five-a-side football every Tuesday night but I had to stop playing as a couple of times I came away with some bruises (ah bless, did TC's tackle slide in too hard? – SL). Not what I needed leading up to a race – imagine trying to explain that one to the team manager. Luckily, I never got a serious injury from football but some of the bruises were enough to bring the ice pack out of the freezer.

That's about all for now – I'm looking forward to next month where I can fill you in on the first couple of races. Take it easy but ride hard...







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WORDS BY STEVIE MILLS

IRISH INVASION!

WATCH OUT MAINLAND BRITAIN – THE BOYS FROM THE EMERALD ISLE ARE ON THEIR WAY OVER...

CITY NORTH Hotel provided the backdrop for the MCUI off-road awards where more than 400 people turned out to support the cream of both youth and adult motocross plus the top three supermoto racers who received their silverware on the same billing.

Man of the moment Wayne Garrett did the honour of presenting the prizes and then gave an insight into his plans for this year with the now Suzuki-mounted Moto-One squad. As per usual MC for the day Roy Neill raised a few laughs as he interviewed the top three finishers as they stood on the podium to collect their awards.

Young hot shot Edward Allingham has been chalking up plenty of air miles and adding even more silverware to his ever-expanding trophy cabinet. And wins in both 125 Stock and Modified classes at the Mini-Os at Gatorback in the Sunshine State of Florida are for sure one way of dealing with the winter blues!

To say young Allingham has a busy schedule over the next 12 months is an understatement as he's committed to the British BYMX and MXY2 race series while home fans will get a chance to see him battle in the Ulster MX2 champs.

The Irish MX championship series will take in all four corners of the island, starting on April 18 at one of the world's premier MX venues. A new eight-round format this year will take in four events in the north – Desertmartin, Seaford, Tandragee and Donamanagh – and four in the south – Athlone, Dundalk, Fews and Cork.

Wayne Garrett is the man to beat. His fitness is better than it has ever been and Wayne has the ability to break top 12 in British championship motos if he gets out of the gate. And bright lights are waiting for team-mate Graeme Irwin as the teenager enters his first season of British MX2 racing. Irwin has speed – he proved that time and time again on the way to lifting the 2007 MXY2 British crown against the fastest youngsters in the UK – but don't expect too much from the kid first time out (although Graeme has a rare raw talent so an upset is possible).

Martin Barr has been on Blarney's blower and word from the ever-smiling Dixon/Bike-it man is that he's good to go. Very much part of the GP team this year, Barty is delighted with the new YZ and support package that Steve has put together. On reflection, Barty's des Nations performance and his rides at the Italian and British GPs along with the Brit champs race at Desertmartin were pretty much the highlights of '07.

I believe Martin is ready to take another step forward. He has developed further in both his physical and mental preparation and has made a wise choice staying with Steve Dixon for 2008 which may well be the most important season yet for the Larne man. As with so many

athletes, speed and talent will only get you so far and many races are won or lost before the startgate even drops. If our Martin can keep his head in 'the zone' he'll continue to fan the flames of his burning desire for recognition as a world class contender.

With the Crock Star's departure starting to sink in among the masses of Sunday afternoon Eurosport fans, the news that the MX2 races will be screened live has rekindled local interest. Actually, come to think of it, we'll have plenty of Irish motorcycle TV action this year with Marty in the GPs and also joining Irwin, Garrett and Hammy in the British champs. I'm sure we may even see Allingham taking in a few rounds.

At the recent star-studded Irish Racer Awards, McC and myself found ourselves in a most uncharacteristic predicament – welded to the bar. It was after about a dozen double vodka and Red Bulls or so that we came

GATORBACK WAS A HAPPY HUNTING GROUND FOR EDWARD ALLINGHAM



to the conclusion that Tarmac racers are actually failed motocrossers! And what a great accolade for MX that evening when Graeme Irwin lifted the Young Rider of the Year against the might of the Tarmac stars while Wayne Garrett convincingly won Motocross Rider of the Year.

With the closure of Ballykelly it will be the Donamanagh circuit that will run both Grade C qualification races and the infamous March Hare Motocross. The pre-season hype is rapidly turning into blind panic as the calendar ticks down the days until wheels will turn in earnest. Remember, come March it will be plain to see who has put in the work over the winter months – and who hasn't!

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WORDS AND PHOTO BY JONTY EDMUNDS

WHO'S THE DADDY?

LJUNGGREN, SALMINEN, AHOLA AND CERVANTES ALL SWITCH CLASSES FOR '08 WHICH MEANS NO RIDER WILL RUN #1 IN THIS YEAR'S WEC

IT'S GOING to be a funny old year in the WEC this season. As the snow-covered opening round rapidly approaches and pre-championship testing is stepped up a gear the off-season merry-go-round has officially stopped turning. And instead of the expected minor changes a much more dramatic outcome has developed. Due to some last minute class hopping not one rider will carry a #1 plate in the '08 World Enduro Championship.

For Joakim Ljunggren, the '06 and '07 Enduro Junior world champion, it's simply a time to move on. Too fast and too old to remain in the Junior class he has to step into the senior ranks. For Ivan Cervantes, who wanted to remain in the E3 class after winning the championship last year, it's a case of doing as KTM ask and heading back to E1. For Juha Salminen a new season, as always for the Finn, brings with it the chance to try something new. Unchallenged in '07 having dominated the E1 championship, Juha heads to E2 this season. Last but not least Mika Ahola, who finally realised his career-long dream of winning a world title in '07, has decided to leave the E2 class and head to E1.

For last year's Enduro Junior world champion '08 will be a hugely important season. With Sweden having not had a regular podium finisher in the WEC for several years, Ljunggren is the one rider than can put that right. Armed with Husaberg's radically new forward facing cylinder bike, a lot is expected of the reigning EJ champion as he makes his senior debut in the E2 class.

It's no surprise that Juha Salminen hasn't remained in the Enduro 1 class in '08. Juha – as he does every season – has refreshed his motivation by switching classes. And in the year in which he can win a record-breaking eighth world title he's opted to compete in what's arguably the most competitive class of all – Enduro 2. Or at least it used to be.

For last year's E2 world champ Ahola, '08 will be tough. A rider who's ridden nothing smaller than a 450cc four-stroke for the past eight years, Mika – somewhat surprisingly – has decided to compete in the Enduro 1 class. Downsizing after so many years will be anything but easy for Mika. But he's ready and looking forward to the challenge.

Jumping from E3 to E1, Ivan Cervantes returns to a class in which he already has two world titles. Although a move directed by KTM rather than requested by Ivan, the Spaniard will take no time to readjust to smaller machinery.

So who is likely to come out on top in '08? And what classes are going to be hardest to win? Without doubt the Enduro 1 class is going to be incredibly competitive. With riders like Cervantes, Ahola, Simone Albergoni, Bartosz Oblucki, Cristobal Guerrero, Marc Germain, Antoine Meo and Tom Sagar all wanting to win, competition for podium places will be fierce. But does anyone stand a chance of really beating Ivan? Twice an E1 world champion, as a rider that has the speed, experience and confidence to win, Ivan will take some stopping.

Last season the E2 class featured the most big names. This year with Ahola moving to E1 and Samuli Aro, Stefan Merriman, Fabien Planet and Xavi Galindo all heading to E3 the Enduro 2 class is all of a sudden nowhere near as competitive as it was last year. That said it won't be any easier to win than in '07. Two riders stand head and shoulders above all others this season – Yamaha's Johnny Aubert and KTM's Juha Salminen. And as such two battles will be fought out in E2 – the battle to win and the battle among the rest of the riders for the third podium position. The Salminen versus Aubert fight is the big one as far as the '08 WEC series is concerned.

Despite his unquestionable speed Johnny Aubert will certainly have his work cut out if he is to beat the WEC's most successful

ever rider. He will likely be able to match Juha's speed in most conditions but does he have what it takes to beat the rider that hasn't lost a championship in nine consecutive years? Only time will tell.

Finally we come to the Enduro 3 class. A class that lacked depth in '07, will this season be one of the most competitive? With Samuli Aro, Marko Tarkkala, Stefan Merriman, Seb Guillaume, Anders Eriksson, Fabien Planet, Christophe Nambotin, Markus Kehr and more all wanting to deliver the goods competition will remain fierce throughout the top 10.

With some riders reverting back to two-stroke machinery while others switch in the other direction, KTM's Finnish duo of Aro and Tarkkala – plus Aprilia-mounted Merriman and Husqvarna's Guillaume – will start as favourites. The eventual championship winner is anyone's guess.



JOHNNY AUBERT WILL HAVE HIS WORK CUT OUT TO BEAT JUHA SALMINEN IN E2 IN '08



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All letters/emails must be accompanied by a full address. Oh and please don't send emails all in capitals. Cheers!



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SMOKIN' PIPE!

I have a '07 YZ250 two-stroke – could you please give me advice on the best all-round quality power pipe for this bike. I use it for motocross only – not enduro – and I hear so much at the track about all the different pipes to use and would just like some advice on the best pipe to make the bike bark cleaner all the way through as I feel the stock pipe tends to slightly choke the power in certain places. Also, would I need to adjust the jetting slightly after fitting a full power pipe?

Dale, via email

It sounds like a little tweak on the jetting might help get your bike running as Yamaha intended with the stock pipe fitted. Once you fit an aftermarket pipe you will need to re-jet your carburetor again depending on the ambient air temperature, track conditions and elevation you ride at.

There are plenty of quality pipe makers out there and you can't really go wrong although a pipe produced by a European manufacturer is probably more suited to what you're after – HGS pipes are a good bet and readily available from UK importers Hardcore Racing on 01484 813755.

If you want to buy British try DEP Pipes. As main sponsors and promoters of Britain's premier two-stroke-only MX championship, DEP have a real interest in two-stroke performance tuning. Call Craig at DEP Pipes on 01622 765353 for a chat on how to get the best out of your YZ.

BIG FOOT

I have size 15 feet (UK) and my boots are starting to get tight. I ordered my last boots from the States but that was fairly costly. Do you know of anyone that stocks this size in the UK as I have searched and searched with no luck. The magazine is great by the way – keep up the good work!

Dan, Darlington

Alpinestars stockists seem to be your best bet as Tech 8s are available up to size 14 while Tech 6s and Tech 3s come in size 15. You might find running a pair of size 14 Tech 8s without the inner bootie is your best bet – AMA supercross star Davi Millsaps is a size 13 but is able to run size 11s without the inner boot. Give CI Sport a call on 01372 362511 to find your local stockist.

TRAINING TRAVESTY!

My name is James, I'm 14-years-old, I ride motocross and I buy your magazine every month. A few weeks ago I went practising at Armthorpe and while I was having a break I started to watch the autos on the minibike track and they were pretty good. I then saw one of them fall off and he looked like he had hurt himself but his dad started shouting and swearing at him telling him to get back on his bike. I felt sorry for the lad who had fallen off because he looked to be trying his best and anyway I thought the whole point of practising is to get better and have some fun, not to be shouted at when you do fall off. Do you agree?

James, North Yorkshire

You're dead right – off-road motorcycling is all about having fun and crashing is a big part of learning and improving in this sport. If you're trying hard it's bound to happen sooner or later – so why anyone would berate a loved one in public for slipping off is crazy. Grown ups don't respond well to negative feedback and children are no different. Hopefully more parents will figure this out before they drive a deep rift between themselves and their offspring.

HILLBILLY!

Firstly I want to say cheers for providing such a great magazine to entertain us all each month – keep it up! Secondly I was hoping you could shed some light on the Foxhill GP situation... In the recent issue of DBR there was a calendar of the forthcoming motocross events in 2008 and I spotted the Foxhill date was on June 1. Until this point I hadn't heard anything about this? Can we really get our hopes up for a motocross return to this amazing venue?

Mike, via email

Sorry to burst your bubble Mike but since the dates and venues were announced fantastic Foxhill has been replaced by Mallory Park. Bum! But it's still a British GP so we should still be celebrating. Not so bum!

HE'S FRED UP!

In recent months I've noticed you've been poking fun at people's names and where they come from in Rant and I'm sick and tired of it!

There's been Burt from Lancaster, Eric from Morecambe and even Chuck from Bury. It's almost as if you're making them up to amuse yourselves – they're certainly getting more and more contrived. Please stop – it's not funny!

Fred, West Country

We'll get our coats...taxi!!

SPANNER SPINNERS!

Firstly I'd like to say how class your magazine is – it's spot on!

I've just turned 16 and I'm hoping to go on to a mechanic course in college. In the future I'd like to be a mechanic for some motocross teams as this would be my dream job! I can do the basics on my own bike and I'm keen to get stuck in but what is the best way I can get into this industry? Any suggestions would be a great help.

Ed, Herefordshire

There's no set path for taking your dream of becoming a motocross mechanic and turning it into reality. All the top spanner-spinners we know have different stories of how they got their dream job – here's how Tommy Searle's mechanic Gareth Edmunds got his gig...

"I have been involved with racing since I was four years old and have always been interested in all things mechanical so never thought twice about getting stuck into anything if it needed fixing. When I stopped racing at the end of 2004 I decided to concentrate on being a mechanic.

"I was halfway through a HND in Motorsport Engineering at the time so I already had some idea of the kind of direction I wanted to go in – I just had to decide if I wanted to go into road bikes, cars or off-road motorcycle racing.

"I was approached by BMW's Simon Pavey to prepare two bikes for the 2005 Dakar. I completed the rally with Si and when I got back Charley Boorman was looking for someone to prepare his bikes for the rally the following year. So a few weeks after finishing university I moved out to Germany to complete the 'Race to Dakar'.

"In between doing my Dakar jobs I'd been helping out Ryan Voase. Thanks to Ryan's connections with Kawasaki Europe he helped me find a job there. He hooked me up with Steve Guttridge and a few weeks later Lisa Church at Molson Kawasaki emailed me about a job working with a 15-year-old kid called Tommy Searle. I hadn't heard much about Tommy before that so I made a few enquiries and that was that. Three years later I'm still working for him but now we're at the KTM Factory in Austria.

"One thing to take into account when looking at getting into being a race mechanic is the amount of time spent away from home. I live abroad 11 months of the year with very few days off in that time. If you're happy enough to do that then go for it. I'd advise you to go out, offer your services, get your face known and give out your CV. Good luck!"

Next Issue On Sale March 14

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Never say die!

At the back end of last year it looked like

*Kevin Windham was about to call it a day.
He may have won the final moto of the 2007
Nationals but K-Dub was dropping hints he was
over the whole AMA deal – then Honda took his
works bike away and slashed his pay cheque.*

*Luckily for fans of #14 he reacted like a
red-blooded racer and so far has taken three
podiums out of five (it would have been four
but for a puncture at Anaheim 3) to show
the Honda head honchos got it wrong!*

Photo: Steve Cox





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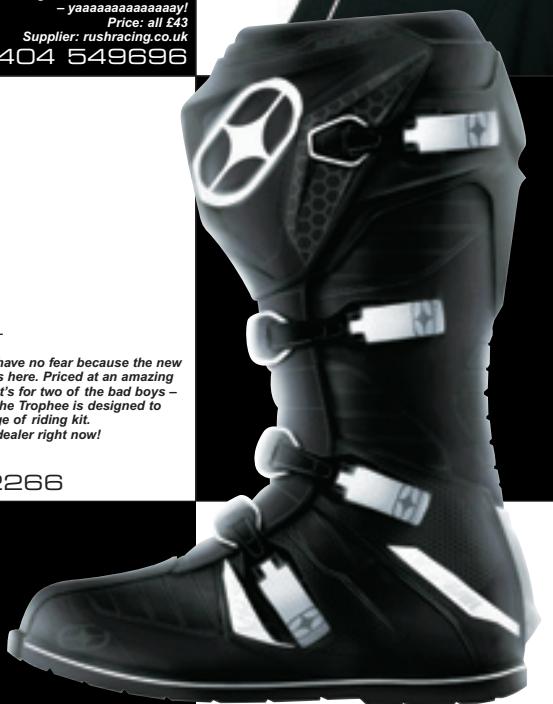
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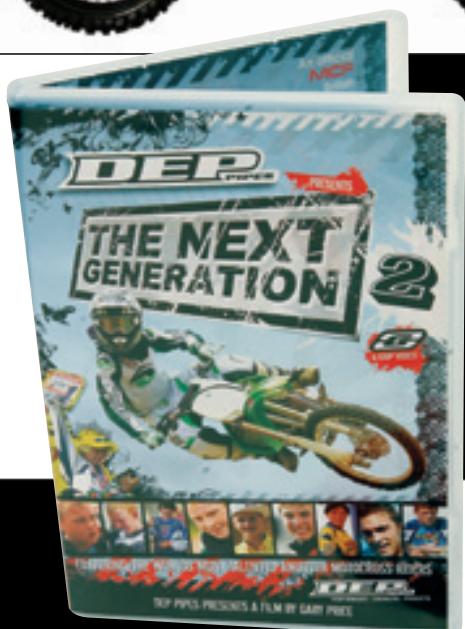
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Typical mad, bad Maxxis action from 2007 with Jordan Rose leading Alex Rach at Lyng



BRIT HOT!

TAKE THOSE PESKY NORTH AMERICANS OUT OF THE EQUATION AND WE'VE GOT PROBABLY THE BEST DOMESTIC MOTOCROSS CHAMPIONSHIP IN THE WORLD – BUT WHO'S GOING TO BE TOP DOG IN MX1 AND MX2 THIS SEASON? DBR'S OWN TOP DAWG GIVES HIS TIPS...

Words and photos by **SUTTY**

You know it, the Queen knows it and I knows it too – British is best! And with this in mind it's not surprising that the Maxxis British motocross championship is considered to be quite possibly the finest domestic national series in the entire world – well, except for the Canadian and AMA Nationals. With eight rounds, three classes and 35 positions available on the line for each point-paying moto the Maxxis series attracts the

very finest of British beef plus more than a few exotic foreign morsels to each and every stop on its tour.

Starting in March and running through to the end of September the Maxxis series visits almost every corner of the UK – sorry but you're ***t out of luck if you live in the North East or above Hadrian's Wall (why do you think it was built?) – with races at top venues including Canada Heights, Desertmartin, Lyng, Foxhill and

the Parks of Hawkstone and Donington. Both of last year's championship chases came down to the final round at Pontrilas with Scotsman Billy MacKenzie winning his first ever national title on the KRT Kawasaki in MX1 while CAS Honda's transatlantic challenger Mike Brown stuck it to the kiddies to win his second British title some seven years after taking his maiden victory.

Last year marked the first season CAS Honda failed to win the British Open championship

*Big of heart, small of stature
(and even smaller of brain?) –
Johnny May is an all-action
kinda guy*



*Privateers like Andrew Wilson
are the lifeblood of the series*

since Paul Malin chugged to victory on the Cadbury's Boost Yamaha in 1999. Since then Crockard, Cooper, Coppins and De Dycker have all done their bit to ensure the CAS team stayed on top until Billy upset their applecart last summer by beating Keeno to the title. But, even before Mac211 had secured the MX1 crown for Kawasaki, the flying Scotsman had signed on the dotted line for the HRC-backed British team for '08 ensuring the #1 plate stays on a >>

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PHOTO: ARCHER R



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For '08 Jamie Law's sticking with Relentless



The MX2 men get off the line at Brampton



Mike Brown (main) and Billy MacKenzie (left) will both carry the #1 plate on their CAS Hondas



red rider's bike. While Billy and CAS are obvious favourites for the titles who else is in with a chance of taking the '08 crown?

The one man Billy's already called out as his biggest threat in '08 is Swift Suzuki's Brad Anderson who's more than up for the task of sticking it to Billy and anyone else who's up for the ruck. Leaving the Pioneer Yamaha team behind in search of a full-time GP ride, the Tow Law resident is equally as useful in sand or on hardpack and if his '07 form is a fair indicator the 2008 championship could go to the line.

Another feisty northerner with a new team for '08 is Wulfsport KTM's James Noble. James has regularly finished in the top three of the Maxxis MX1 championship in the past few years and is always a threat to take a moto wins at any time – race two at James' home round at Whitley Bay was in the bag until the clerk of the course chucked out the red flag 30 seconds too early!

Between them you can more or less

guarantee that MacKenzie, Noble and Anderson will be doing their best to hog the podium all year but there are a couple more or so scurvy currs who could potentially rock the boat in a piratey fashion to take the championship trophy and associated booty – garr.

Molson Kawasaki's longest serving rider Tom Church takes the mighty step from MX2 to MX1 in '08 with the Marshfield Mafia member stepping up to a 450 for the first time in his life! An MX2 moto winner in 2007, TC's in the best shape of his life and appears to be more motivated than ever – apparently some things do get better with age and it seems that Tom's somewhat like a fine cheese or malt whisky!

Filling the void left at Pioneer Yamaha by the departure of Anderson is the current British four-stroke champion Wayne Smith who also makes a full-time move to the MX1 division in '08. Considered a real threat for MX2 championship honours in the past, Wayne

seems to have lost focus in the last couple of years but if there's anyone who knows how to get the best from his riders it's Pioneer's tip-top top-tech Mike Foster who helped nurture Brad Anderson to where he is today. And if that's not enough to motivate Smith a couple of good ole rollockings from team owner and all-round sweary bloke Roy Emberson should do the trick.

All Yamaha's eggs are not in one basket though as Steve Dixon has brought a brand-new Kenneth to our domestic championship in the form of Kenneth Gunderson. The Norwegian ex-factory Kawasaki star is a real threat to win motos but is more of an MX2 specialist and could find the going hard against the likes of MacKenzie and Anderson.

Other riders you can expect to see in the top 10 and possibly even slipping a top five result in on special occasions are Jordan Rose, the Smyth brothers (Danny and Jody) and Glen Phillips.

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RACES IN PLACES

THE WHERE AND WHEN OF THE MAXXIS >>

ROUND ONE – MARCH 9

Donington Park is not only home to the Motocross des Nations in 2008 but also round one of our domestic series. The jump-filled, clay-based circuit is a funny choice for the season opener due to the fact it's most likely gonna be a quagmire if it rains but who's ever heard of rain in March? Just one week after the UK's perennial season opening race at Hawkstone, the first round could be full of surprises although there's no way the real contenders will turn up anything but ready for war!

ROUND TWO – MARCH 23

Usually the race with the highest attendance of the season, the Canada Heights round is normally a classic as regular track changes, an awesome racing surface and some wicked elevation changes make for what's one of the best motocross tracks in Britain. Situated close to the M20/M25 interchange near Dartford, this all-weather hillside track has great access too – definitely a must-not-miss event!

ROUND THREE – APRIL 13

It's a real shame to lose Landrake but old-school Devonshire fans will be glad to see Torrington pop back on the Maxxis schedule. Set in the rolling countryside that inspired Henry Williamson to write the classic novel *Tarka the Otter* in the 1920s, historians will also be interested to read that the Battle of Torrington – which marked the end of royalist resistance in the West Country – was fought nearby in 1646. This year's battle is bound to be much more exciting...

ROUND FOUR – MAY 4

The fourth round on the fourth day and held in Norfolk? Fear ye not turnip crunchers because the long drive to Lyng is well worth it for a day's worth of top off-road action. Billiard-table smooth in the morning and rougher than a badger's botty in the afternoon, the Cadders Hill circuit is a real tester for the Maxxis regulars.

ROUND FIVE – JUNE 22

Come with me across the Irish Sea for round five of the series held at Porter's Pit near Desertmartin. The only Saturday race of this year's championship, the sand, jumps, rocks, hills, fans and a frantic first turn make the journey west well worth it.

ROUND SIX – JULY 27

Foxhill is a name that strikes fear into riders and excitement into spectators due to the ferociousness of the slippery chalk slopes and jump-filled valley of the ex-GP venue near Swindon. A regular stop on the British Masters schedule it's been a good few years since the Maxxis series has visited the track that Stefan Everts made his own in the mid to late '90s.

ROUND SEVEN – AUGUST 17

Almost completely ruined by rain in '07, the Brampton round may not have a long history like some of the tracks in the Maxxis schedule but what it lacks in lore it more than makes up for in gore by being one of the fastest and roughest tracks in the '08 series – Brampton is brutal!

ROUND EIGHT – SEPTEMBER 21

Saving the best for last, the '08 Maxxis season winds down at Hawkstone Park in Shropshire. Last used as a Maxxis venue in '06, the historic and oh-so-tough circuit regularly serves up a dishful of great racing with a side order of mechanical breakdowns and crashes thrown in as the technical nature of the sandy circuit takes its toll on the unprepared.

Is TC man enough to make the move up to MX1? Don't bet against it...



For more information and regular updates on the Maxxis British motocross championships log on to www.mxgb.info and of course www.dirtbikerider.com.



© rayarcher.com

Swordy's hoping to survive a full season – and make it British crown #4



Elliot Banks-Browne will be aiming for some podiums in MX2



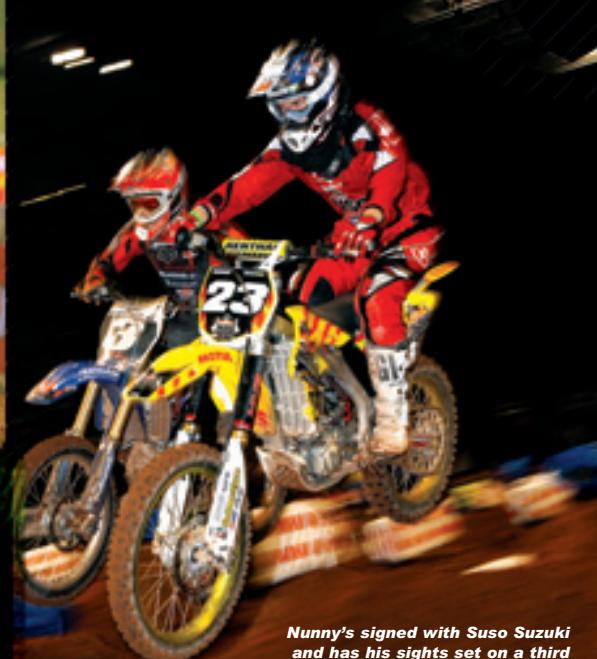
Graeme Irwin topped last year's MXY2

YOUNG GUNS!

SUPPORT THE SUPPORT CLASS!

Seen as something of a crazy idea by some pit pundits before last year's excellent MXY2 encounters, the four-round series for youth riders that will run alongside the main races is all set to return in '08.

Wild and unpredictable, no fewer than seven riders won races last year with only the series champion Graeme Irwin able to romp home to victory on more than one occasion. With the '08 schedule set, race fans at the Donington, Torrington, Foxhill and Brampton rounds will be able to see what are undoubtedly our champions of tomorrow racing today. Show your support by being fenceside when the gate drops for round one.



Nunny's signed with Suso Suzuki and has his sights set on a third British MX2 title in 2008

The big news in the MX2 division is that it's unlikely we'll see Tommy Searle or Gareth Swanepoel take on the full Maxxis series as they concentrate on the world title meaning it's most likely gonna be a battle of the veterans – Mike Brown, Stephen Sword and Carl Nunny. That's not to say the young guns including Jason Dougan, Jake Nicholls or Shaun Simpson won't strike either but more about them later.

Coming into the series holding the #1 plate is defending champ Brown. Sealing the victory at the final round ahead of MX2 world #2 Searle, Brown surprised many who claimed he was washed up and at 35 years old way past it. But a motivated Mike on a good bike is a serious challenger for any title and not even the distraction of switching between the 250F and 450F all season long could make Mike remove his eyes from the prize.

Surprisingly though, double ex-British champion Carl Nunny doesn't see Brownie as the biggest threat to come between himself and his

own third Maxxis title. Stephen Sword is already a three-time British champion but after writing off his 2006 and 2007 campaigns through injury remains a little but of an unknown quantity – although Nunny reckons Swordy will be more motivated than ever to recapture some long forgotten glory.

And Nunny himself is no slouch. After suffering early on in 2007 with an injured back, Carl bounced back to moto wins at Desertmartin and Whitby on his way to eighth in the series. Armed with a super-fast MVR-D Suzuki for '08, Carl could be the man who gives a yellow four-stroke its first ever Maxxis title.

After winning the final round of the '07 championship, Nunny's MVR-D team-mate Jason Dougan must surely start '08 on a high and it's not unreasonable to imagine that the two Suso-sponsored Suzukis could be up front all year long.

It's not just the MVR-D boys who'll be flying the yellow flag as both the Relentless and Swift

squads will be sending their boys into battle. Although unlikely to win a moto, Lewis Gregory, Jamie Law, Jake Nicholls or indeed Elliot Banks-Browne could quite feasibly make it onto the podium once or twice in '08. Ex-Relentless Suzuki teamster Alex Snow joins Shaun Simpson on a Wulfsport KTM. While Snow is good for a top 10 or two Simpson should be at the sharp end all year in a class that's packed with young talent.

And what about the young man who held off The GOAT long enough at last year's MXdN to warrant an arm wave of annoyance? Martin Barr's been getting stronger and stronger on the Bike-it Dixon Yamaha and now as the team's #1 MX2 rider it's time for Barty Marr to deliver. Series podium placer? Could be!

It's easy to guess at who'll win and who won't but there's only one thing that's certain – we ain't gonna find out a thing until the gate drops for race one at round one.

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Brownie leads eventual '07 world champ Steve Ramon in France



BEGINS AT...

AT AN AGE WHEN MOST PROS WOULD HAVE LONG SINCE KNOCKED IT ON THE HEAD, MIKE BROWN'S STILL HANDING OUT RIDING LESSONS TO THE NIPPERS – INDOORS AND OUT!

Words and photos by ALEX HODGKINSON



After a stormy debut European season in '97 Mike went home – but he was back in '99 racing for Thorpey's CAT Honda team



Brownie took in the final round of last year's AMA Nationals at Glen Helen



© Sutty



He's the granddaddy of top grade motocross at 35 – and he'll turn an 'ancient' 36 in May – but Mike Brown still showed the kids how to race in 2007 with a GP moto win in MX1 and a British title ahead of a dozen GP runners including world number two Tommy Searle.

CAS Honda's American rebel shows no sign of slowing down and already has his first major prize of 2008 under his belt, winning a new car at the high-profile Dortmund SX on the second weekend of the year. And at an age when most pros would have long since knocked it on the head there's still no end in sight!

"We'll see how it goes. If I keep riding like I did in '07 I'll have to keep hanging another year on the end. I can't stop when it's going so good. I mean, I won a GP moto, I won another British championship in a straight fight with the world number two and I'm looking forward to it again. Being out in front helps. It has to come to an end one day but I'll just keep taking it one year at a time and see how it goes."

And while many of the youngsters take a break in the autumn to recharge their batteries, Brownie is keeping the cash register

flowing with a full season of Euro SX. "It's good for me to keep racing. I enjoy racing and I feel bad if I'm sitting at home not doing anything. And you make good money. So that can't be bad, making money and having fun at the same time!"

"I even did two races on one weekend in November – Madrid on Friday and Saturday, then Bercy on the Sunday. I think I've ridden Bercy more often than anyone else and Xavier told me a few years back I was always welcome. With Jeremy having to get back to California for the Baja on Sunday it worked out perfectly for all of us."

"So many of the top guys in the States don't want to come to Europe anymore. It's hard for them because of the testing before the AMA season starts the first week of January and it's hard for the promoters. But it's good for me and I guess I rode just about every SX in Europe this year and I was on the podium just about every race so I guess I'm good value to them too."

Brownie is old school, racing when there's something to be won and kicking back when the schedule takes a break. "It's good to have some time to get your body healed" >>



© Sutty

Mike was quickest out of the gate all season





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up and rested ready to get back into it and racing here in Europe I can actually spend more time with my family than if I rode in America. The teams all want you to ride SX over there and if I was doing that I'd be in California for two months before the series starts and then week after week travelling to the races. Then straight into the Nationals and as soon as you finish those you're back getting ready for the next SX. I like to have some time off racing at the start of the year. I'll still be riding but I'm ready for the new season that way as well as being with my family."

Having said that, '07 didn't take off too well. The starts were there – it was the season finale before Mike failed to holeshot at least one GP moto – but arm-pump pushed him downfield on a regular basis.

"I think it's probably more in the head – not being comfortable on the bike and needing to warm up. I had it on the 450 just like I did on the 250 two-stroke in supercross. I think it's down to not getting enough time for practice at the races. I struggled through the first third of the season but Japan was the turning point.

"Japan was rough, I think that helped me. And it was warm there. Whenever it's warm I never get arm pump and I think I need to warm up a bit more on those cold days at the start of the year over here, get my blood circulating before I go out there to race. Going from cold to hot has to have something to do with it. And where I come from it's always warm, I guess my body never had to get used to the cold and doesn't like it."

Finishing eighth in the world was not what Mike had been aiming for but on reflection he achieved most of what he was going for in '07. "I was going for top five in the world. It didn't happen but if we had started from Japan I would have been there and in Britain I wanted to win the MX2 and I did. To have done what I have at my age is pretty good. I reached my goals.

"And it was fun beating the kids for the title. I might not have been the fastest guy on the track every week but I was always up there. Tommy is fast and he beat me a lot of times but I was always there not far behind and then I had my days."

Initially Honda and CAS had planned to switch Mike full-time to MX1 in '08 but fate – or rather a sponsorship deal – has given Mike and the UK fans the best of both worlds. "I'm racing MX2 in the British again. Monster Energy have come on board and they want me to defend the title again. That suits me too. I don't have any

problem switching classes, I never did. Other guys have problems with that but it never bothered me, in fact I think I'd get bored riding the same bike all year.

"And switching helps me stay aggressive on the big bike, it keeps my corner speed up. I mean, if I had a choice I'd rather race MX2 just because I have more fun on it and I believe I have a chance to be right up at the front. I'd just love to race Cairoli."

Mike also has a definite stand on the FIM's plans to age restrict the MX2 class. "They were already talking about this age limitation thing when I was over here in 1999 and again when I came back in '04/05. I don't know what they want. The kids are learning by racing against older riders but the people it is going to hurt most are those people who just aren't built physically for MX1. There are guys who still aren't ready at 25. Age shouldn't have anything to do with it, they should just let



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"It's the same in the US where you can't ride the small bike in SX for three years when you've pointed out. The Stewarts and Reeds aren't going to move back to the Lites class but it's going to hurt people and end their careers. They could be top five MX2, can't handle a 450 and they'll be done."

The return of HRC involvement to the GP scene inevitably is a cause for delight. "We won't have all the stuff until the second half of January but that will give me an extra boost this summer. I've never had a full factory bike like we're going to be getting this year and I'm excited about that. Our bikes were good last year

and a 450's fast enough anyway but they can help us in many other ways.

"When we went to Japan last summer they already gave us stuff, different clutch levers to help my arm pump – stuff like that – and you realised straight away that you were talking to people who understand what's going on. The '09 Hondas will come with Kayaba and we'll be getting full GP support from Technical Touch.

"I hope I can give them the benefit of my experience too but that's not why they hired me. They hired me to win races. I think I have shown with my form in SX this winter that I'm not slowing down so perhaps top five can be possible this summer, particularly if I can start

the year how I ended '07."

Mike ended the weekend in Dortmund with a brand new car and a whole new set of admirers. Jochen Jasinski, still racing supermoto but five years past the end of his MX career, was overwhelmed by Mike's style and commitment. "How old is he? No way, that's only one year younger than me and his cornering is so aggressive – those block passes, not dirty, perfect and the way he slingshots out of turns. The kids could learn a lot from watching Mike."

But the car – a Toyota Auris – stayed in Germany with Mike taking the cash equivalent. "Nice car but I guess Honda wouldn't be too pleased if I turned up driving one of those!"

Mike's been a hard man to beat during the Euro SX season



LIFE AFTER RACING

FAMILY TIES...

Of course, one day it has to end so what's Mike planning? "I didn't start until I was 13 but I've been racing pro since 1990 and I love travelling and seeing the world. But it's coming closer and I'm getting kinda worried about that. I still love racing motorcycles and I probably won't ever stop completely. I don't ever want to quit but I know there will come a time when I have to.

"Ryan Hughes and LaRocco were talking about it. Racing is all we ever did and I hope I can stay in it but I'm not sure yet what I'll do when it finally is over. If it still goes good then I'll keep on racing, if not I think I'd like to manage a team or even go and ride the GNCC in America. I have an offer already to do that in 2009.

"I'm sure I can hang another couple of years on with the GNCC and I've ridden woods all my life. That's where I live and what I enjoy. That's all I've been doing when I've been home the last couple of months. And GNCC is more laidback so I could take the family. For sure that is my next option."

And with two sons Mike could become a next generation schoolboy dad. "My youngest will be one next month but the five-year-old has been riding since he was two-and-a-half. But it scares me to death. I don't want to see him get hurt. I remember my mom and dad were the same with me. You know how much pain you have had over the years and you just don't want your kids to suffer that."

"The last two weeks he had the flu and has kept needing to go to the doctors – he needs to have his tonsils out next month and just that is too much for dad. He had a temperature of 106 and they're taking blood but he never cried, he's a tough kid. I never try to encourage him. I can't even watch him ride in the yard but if he wants to ride I won't stop him."

"There is one thing dad does insist on though. "He wears a neck brace. I didn't need to persuade him but I would have done. Anything that can help. Neil [Prince] handed me one last year and I never notice it's there. I won't ride without it now."

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AS GOOD AS IT GETS?

MODERN TRIALS BIKES HAVE BEEN REFINED TO THE POINT WHERE THERE'S HARDLY ANY ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT BUT FOR 2008 THE SHERCO BOFFINS HAVE MANAGED A FEW TWEAKS AND TICKLES...

Words by **Dan Clark** Photos by **Sutty**

"Does mah bum look big in this?" Invoice safely in t'post, Clarky gets stuck into some testing...





Handling across the range is spot on although Clarky felt the suspension was a little on the stiff side



Refined to the point where they can't get much better (at least not without a ground-breaking redesign or the influx of alien technology), trials bikes are now generally so good it's difficult to objectively test them without being overly picky. Gone are the days of terrible steering geometry that would tuck-in if you turned too tightly, poor jetting that created massive flat spots in the engine's power delivery, irregular shaped sump guards – a real pet hate of mine – and pogo-like suspension that pinged off rocks in all directions bar the one you wanted.

Each and every trials bike manufacturer have done their darnedest to deliver a bike which is more or less perfect and Sherco aren't any different. While the basic design hasn't visually changed much in a good few years the entire range of Sherco trials irons still looks relatively fresh with a sleek minimalist design that's both appealing to the eye and very, very functional (kinda like your haircut, eh Clarky – AS).

At first sight the '08 Shercos look like they have for the last five years or so but there are new funkier plastics with graphics to match – white with black, grey and blue for the smokers and white with black, grey and red for the four-popper – which certainly help improve the bikes' image

while a new FIM-legal front disc guard and lighter, tidier fitting kick-stand help finish off the look.

Peer closer still and you'll see new kevlar wrapped Ceriani front forks are fitted as well as a dual stage ignition with settings for both dry and wet weather – although I can't see the dry setting getting much use this summer, or any other season for that matter.

I know I'm getting older and my hair's getting a wee bit thinner but I seriously can't remember the last time I tested a 125cc Sherco for DBR – it's been a chuffing while anyway. So after slipping into something a little comfier – mmmm, lycra – I jumped on board the baby of the range to check it out.

Since the change in FIM rules that's seen youth riders limited to 125cc machines all the manufacturers – well, those who still make a 125 smoker – have pulled out their collective fingers to get their eighth-litre bikes up to speed. Sherco have played a blinder with theirs and I've got to say that I think their 125 might just be the 125 of the year!

The footpegs feel higher than on most other brands of bike which felt a little strange and uncomfortable at first but I soon got used to it. This bike feels light and the frame's geometry is like my favourite brand of >>

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flea powder – spot on – and makes for a great turning machine.

The suspension does have a tendency to feel a little wooden at times although it does absorb everything well. I can only assume this is something to do with the revised 'anti-bottoming' settings and I'm sure a little tweak will help bring both ends of the bike to life.

I can't quite believe just how much low-end power and torque this 125 motor has. When I was a runny-nosed B Class rider, 125s always had horrible hit of peaky power and were a bit of a beast to ride (insert your own joke about a previous partner here) but this is a real treat and no mistake. I seriously wish we had 125s like this back in the day as I reckon we'd have learnt a lot more about riding a trials bike properly instead of jumping onto a 250 at 14 and relying on the abundance of power.

The '08 2.5 Sherco is definitely my favourite of the range. The power can be rolled on to deliver really soft, nice drive which is great for finding grip in slippery situations but then there's also a big burst when you need it to help you get up big rock steps, small buildings or even an elephant's gigantic arse if you need to. While there is muchos power on tap it's always possible to keep control which is totally important. Sharing the

same chassis and suspension as its kid brother, the 250 handles impeccably although there's still a slight wooden feel from the boingers.

While it's only 40ccs bigger – that's roughly the same as a shot and a half from the top row of your local hostelry – the 2.9 packs way more punch than the 250 making it ideal for experts and the slightly more portly trials rider who perhaps spends way too much time drinking shots and eating pork scratchings at his own local. I reckon the extra power this super-sized bike delivers could potentially give you more problems than benefits so I'd choose the 250 every single time.

I've not ridden a four-stroke Sherco before and was surprised by the noise this 320cc bike makes on full-bore – it's awesome although perhaps a little more suitable for speedway than hopping about on rocks. The 3.2 feels super-light for a four-stroke – it's probably the lightest feeling cam and valve train bike I've ridden and thanks to the styling it shares with its two-stroke brethren it's one of the best looking too. Even with the extra three-and-a-half kilos the 3.2 packs the suspension is still slightly stiff and wooden feeling but everything else – the handling, brakes and general feel – is sweeter than honey.

The 2.5 gets Dan's vote but he was impressed by the whole range of '08 Shercos



SPECS

1.25

Capacity:	124.7cc
Bore and stroke:	56mm x 50.7mm
Front suspension:	38mm Ceriani (185mm travel)
Rear suspension:	Olle (175mm travel)
Front brake:	185mm disc
Rear brake:	145mm disc
Carburetor:	Dell'Orto PHBL26
Wheelbase:	1322mm
Dry weight:	69.5kg

2.5

Capacity:	249.7cc
Bore and stroke:	72.8mm x 60mm
Front suspension:	38mm Ceriani (185mm travel)
Rear suspension:	Olle (175mm travel)
Front brake:	185mm disc
Rear brake:	145mm disc
Carburetor:	Dell'Orto PHBL26
Wheelbase:	1322mm
Dry weight:	69.5kg

2.9

Capacity:	272cc
Bore and stroke:	76mm x 60mm
Front suspension:	38mm Ceriani (185mm travel)
Rear suspension:	Olle (175mm travel)
Front brake:	185mm disc
Rear brake:	145mm disc
Carburetor:	Dell'Orto PHBL26
Wheelbase:	1322mm
Dry weight:	69.5kg

3.2

Capacity:	317cc
Bore and stroke:	82mm x 60mm
Front suspension:	38mm Ceriani (185mm travel)
Rear suspension:	Olle (175mm travel)
Front brake:	185mm disc
Rear brake:	145mm disc
Carburetor:	Keihin 28mm
Wheelbase:	1322mm
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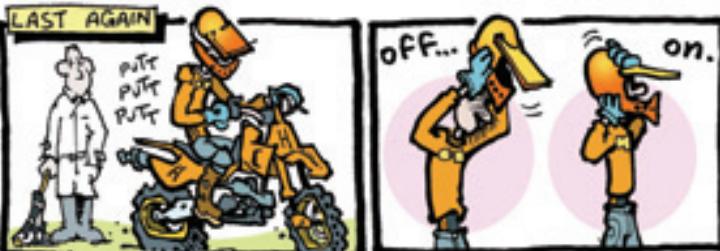
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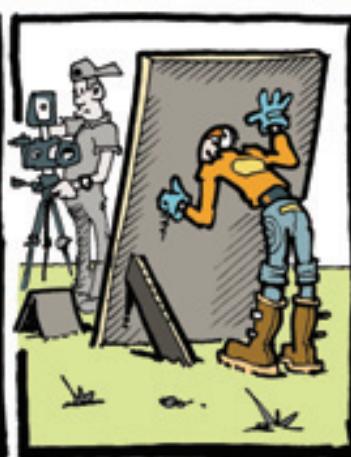




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THE WRIGHT STUFF!

THE LEGENDARY PARTNERSHIP OF 'FOAMIN' BOB' WRIGHT AND CCM HELPED PUT BOTH RIDER AND MACHINE ON THE MAP BUT WHILE THE BIG LANCASTRIAN HAS LONG-SINCE RETIRED, CLEWS' CEMENT MIXERS ARE BACK IN BUSINESS WITH ANOTHER NORTHERN PILOT IN THE HOT SEAT...

Words and photos by Jack Burnicle

I TOOK a last-minute shopping trip to Chester just before Christmas and there, amid the festive bustle, I bumped into CCM boss Austin Clews who was on a family visit to the Roman city to stay with friends.

"Did you know we're going back into motocross next year?" enquired Austin. Yes, I did. "I thought I'd had enough of all that when we stopped before but now I'm really looking forward to it," added Austin. "We won't be expecting to win. In fact, we'll be underdogs." That same manic glare that characterised his dad Alan gleamed in Austin's eyes. "We've always liked it that way..."

They are fielding young Lancastrian Oliver Sandiford-Smith. A former schoolboy and KWS British Masters champ, Oliver moved into adult ranks at 15 but has been beset by injuries these past three seasons. "Now he's training with Dave Thorpe for five weeks to get in shape!" smiled Austin, never really much of a man for getting in shape himself.

As a kid, I'd first seen Alan Clews in action during the mid-sixties, powering an immaculate red Metisse round Boltby in North Yorkshire at the annual 'North versus South' team contest.

When BSA closed down their competitions workshop in 1971, Alan headed south from Bolton to Birmingham and bought a vanload of bits and a dozen factory frames. With a B50 BSA engine bored out to over 600cc, Clews built his first 'Clews

Competition Machine', originally called the 'Clews Stroka'. It was acquired by his first 'works' rider – a tall, rangy, fair-haired Cumbrian farmer named Mike Barnes who had been Northern Centre champion on a Metisse in 1967.

Mike won many races with that Clews Stroka during 1972. They included my first glimpse of the bellowing beast when he crossed the Pennines to Toft Hill, in my native County Durham, on August Bank Holiday Monday. Barnes clinched his second Northern Centre championship that year and remains faithful to CCM today!

Alan Clews took over an old iron foundry building in Bolton to start production of his machines and 42 were built in the first year, the mighty 608cc engine joined by a higher revving short-stroke 500 preferred by the second 'factory' rider, a 20-year-old apprentice mechanic from nearby Sabden with film star good looks called Andy Ainsworth.

The first 'export' model went to France where a truly remarkable CCM following would blossom during the 1970s. And October 1972 was significant in the annals of the company. Ainsworth was joined by his neighbour Bob Wright – a rugged, moustachioed, rural hero whose name would become synonymous with the marque.

Meantime, other leading local riders took to the new four-stroke in an increasingly two-stroke dominated sport. Over in Yorkshire a tall, thin, morose man with a fast, loose riding style called Geoff Stokes was scything down opponents on his 608.



JACK BURNICLE is the godfather (our words, not his) of British MX journalism. Born in Billingham, County Durham, to Bella and nutty (his words, not ours) musical genius Stan Burnicle, Jack was mad about cars and motor racing as a kid. At sweet 16 he got a motorbike, rode it to a local 'scramble' and was instantly, hopelessly hooked. Next time he went he was armed with his mum's Kodak Brownie camera. After art college he mixed life as a graphic designer, magazine art director, photographer and part-time art college tutor with motocross and photo-journalism. Now he's a commentator, painting pictures with words. He never did get a proper job...



DON BROCKBANK HURLS
HIS CCM ACROSS THE
GRELING LEAP AT
HAWKSTONE PARK IN 1974

'FOAMIN' BOB WRIGHT
HAMMERS HIS CCM
ROUND HALSTEAD IN
SEPTEMBER 1973

I once offered Geoff a quality black and white print of himself in action for the paltry sum of half-a-crown. After a few terse moments reflection, Geoff declined. "I'll spend it on t'bike instead," he muttered as if it meant taking out a second mortgage.

Down in the South East, the much more cheerful but equally spectacular Scottish enthusiast Jimmy Stuart campaigned CCMs with similar vigour while Oxfordshire would subsequently reverberate to the outrageous antics of 'Cranky' Ken Hanson. It somehow seemed the way the bikes wanted riding!

In March 1973 'CCM' was officially born and two further factory stalwarts joined the team. Cumbrian Norman Barrow signed alongside chunky little Scot Jimmy Aird, now owner of Barnard Castle-based Scott Leathers and still a winner on his CCM in the Vets class!

Bob Wright hadn't even started racing motocross until he turned 18 and was really nothing more than a brave, hairy North West Centre runner. Yet with CCM 'Foamin' Bob' would achieve international recognition. That summer he scored their first national win after dramatically chasing down British champion Bryan Wade at Glastonbury Tor and sponsorship from British Caledonian Airways helped Clews send

Bob on an audacious trip to the States for the annual autumn Trans-Am series – his best result a fifth place at Livermore near San Francisco!

Sadly, at the end of that year, Bob was tempted away by a big bucks factory contract from Montesa but endured a poor couple of seasons, blighted by a badly broken arm.

Former world 500cc vice-champion John Banks – grandfather of Elliott Banks-Browne – joined CCM in January 1974 and tackled 500cc British and world series. 'Big John' recorded the firm's first British championship success at Tilton in Leicestershire and followed it up with a resounding double at Tirley, Gloucestershire, in the final round to tie with Vic Eastwood for second place in the last-ever British 500cc series. Aird and Norman Barrow also made the top 10 and young Cumbrian tearaway Don Brockbank was creating a stir that year too!

Eastwood, like Banks an ex-BSA star, promptly signed with CCM and set off on his own Trans-Am adventure with wife Ann – their best result a resounding third!

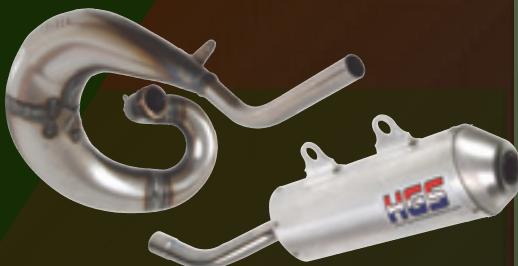
In 1975 the inaugural British Open Championship went down to the wire at Bury St Edmunds where the tenacious, wild-eyed Eastwood eventually lost out by two points to Vic Allan (Bultaco) on a day of >>

RACE TO WIN



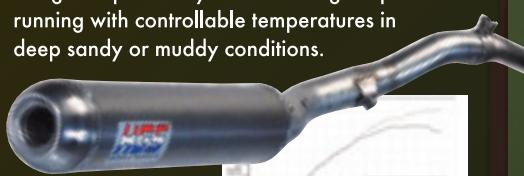
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VIC EASTWOOD'S IMPRESSIVE
DOUBLE WIN AT BULLIP WHEELS
IN JUNE, 1975, WHEN HE
CAME HOME IN 2 POINTS OF
WINNING THE BRITISH OPEN CHAMPIONSHIP

WILD MAN NYLE EASTWOOD,
MINI'S FRONT MUDGUARD,
NOVUS HGS CCM ROUND
NIMMANFIELD IN JULY, 1973

high drama, although CCM's frame-builder Mike Eatough did take the AMCA 750 crown. At the end of the year BSA finally went comprehensively bust, Alan Clews bought up the last B50 engine parts for his burgeoning CCM project and for 1976 Stadium CCM Great Britain was formed. Backed by a consortium headed by Stadium helmets, this gave Clews the financial clout to hire Vic Allan alongside Eastwood, Banks, Aird, Barrow and Brockbank.

Allan and Eastwood were destined to mount grand prix podiums in Austria and Finland respectively and 'Haggis' Allan also grabbed third in the second moto of the British 500 GP at Dodington Park near Bristol. Eastwood, a wiry, committed character, later sensationally led the second leg of the Luxembourg GP for 37 out of 40 minutes until his clutch failed. Team-mate Allan, third overall that day, hoisted himself and CCM to 11th in a world championship won for the fifth and final time by Suzuki's Roger De Coster.

CCM topped off the season with a clean sweep of the final British Open round at Ladies Mile near Portsmouth with Banks, Allan and Eastwood all on the rostrum, meaning Allan finished second in the series with Banks fourth and Eastwood fifth!

'Haggis' then moved to Husqvarna for 1977 while Banks and Eastwood were gloriously joined by CCM's prodigal son Bob Wright. Banks won a TV meeting at Tweseldown – beating British champ Graham Noyce – and Bob blew away the opposition to lift the prestigious Patchquick Trophy down in Devon. Later that year they handsomely led race one of the British 500 GP at Farleigh Castle on a roasting sunny day in front of 20,000 fans. John eventually pulled out and Bob finished sixth but Banks stormed to second in race two behind Heikki Mikkola before controversy exploded over the engine capacity of the CCMs and Bob was cruelly, illegally excluded from the results.

Wright then cleaned up the Lancs Grand National, finished second overall to Neil Hudson in a British title round at Brighton and – in a glittering British Open finale – shared the spoils with Noyce back at Ladies Mile, claiming his maiden British championship race win to finish fourth and best CCM in the series.



BOB WRIGHT (LEFT) AND JOHN BANKS' SENSATIONAL 1-1 LEAD THE FIRST RACE OF THE 1977 BRITISH 500 GP AT CLEARDEN PARK (CASTLE ON THURSTON, CCM'S)

'The Sabden Warrior', as he became known in motocross folklore, remained as Clews' lone full factory pilot for 1978 in a season derailed by injury when Bob fell, was run over by Andre Malherbe and cracked his pelvis at the Swedish GP. Tough as teak, he recovered to record a thundering third overall in the final British Open round at Fenny Compton, outside Banbury, behind future world champions Noyce and Hudson.

Bob flew the flag again in 1979, rampaging to British championship podiums on the new four-valve bike and nailing a career-best sixth overall in the Italian 500 GP at Faenza, unlucky to lose third in the closing stages of race two when the CCM slowed to allow Noyce and Malherbe through on their factory Hondas!

A trip to the States in early June almost cost Wright his life and only, ultimately, added to the legend that was Foamin' Bob. The rock-hard Carlsbad Raceway in Southern California baked beneath a freak heatwave – 120 degrees in the sun and 104 in the shade! Retired from race one with chain problems, Bob boomed into 10th in race two and launched a vain last-lap assault on ninth-placed Honda AMA star Chuck Sun before veering drunkenly across the finishing line and collapsing with severe heat exhaustion.

Bob technically died that day, his heart momentarily stopping before the medics – and MCN's MX correspondent Paul Fowler – revived the stricken Lancastrian who, though rushed to hospital, remained semi-conscious for several hours. Out of 15 Europeans only four made the finish of that race. Yet Bob miraculously picked up another top 10 place in the following week's Canadian round!

At the 10th round in Holland, Alan Clews showed up with his teenage son, schoolboy motocrosser Austin. Come Saturday night we all gathered in Markelo's local bar and began consuming a dangerous local brew. At a sensible hour Alan wished us all goodnight and went off with young Austin, to my amazement leaving Bob behind.

Innumerable beers later and with a frightening lump of a Dutch woman in tow, we were driven back to the paddock where I was supposed to be staying in Pete Mathia's truck! Bob leaned across the back seat. "If she dun't get out of the car with

me, she's yours," he growled threateningly. She didn't. I've never been so terrified in all my life...

How Bob rode the next day I'll never know. As I struggled to control a pair of Nikon cameras and a notebook, he somehow hammered his way through two tough motos – even helping Noyce's world title challenge by baulking race leader Gerrit Wolsink on the final lap as Graham stole by to win!

Second overall at Cuerden Park's final British Open round in his beloved Lancs Grand National sealed fifth in the series for Wright and CCM before he headed across the Channel for a big end-of-season French international round the precipitous chalk slopes of Gaillefontaine. I travelled there in the CCM truck with Bob and his mechanic Ken Sourbutts. The overall verdict eventually rested on the third and final moto which Bob led until the last lap in a blistering duel with French hero (and German 500 GP winner) Jean-Jacques Bruno (KTM), until the CCM slewed suddenly sideways exiting a steep, uphill right-hander and 'JJ' burst through.

Ken was furious but as an apologetic Bob was peeling off his sweat-stained shirt a huge throng of cheering, chanting French fans surged round the CCM awning, paying homage to their acutely embarrassed four-stroke hero!

You see Bob Wright – a terrifying, untamed lion on the track – was (and still is) a shy, retiring man who shunned the limelight. That wonderful, rowdy crowd perfectly illustrated just how big an impact CCM and 'The Sabden Warrior' made on the Continental scene during the 1970s...

He stayed for a further season, doing only the 1980 domestic series and finishing third in the final round before he and CCM parted company.

Austin Clews would prove an able challenger for the inaugural four-stroke national championship of 1988 – ironically won by 43-year-old Vic Allan on a KTM – before CCM briefly re-entered 500 GPs under Austin's direction in 1989 with Ken Hanson's cousin Greg at the helm.

The dashing Greg did eventually – and deservedly – win them that four-stroke national title. Now they're back and 19-year-old Oliver Sandiford-Smith has some mighty boots to fill!



© Sutty

The muck of Brampton is a long way from the glamour of indoor races on the continent – and the sun of Florida – but Ashley knows the importance of getting his head down and grafting

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Words and photos by ALEX HODGKINSON

There'll be a welcome in the valleys when Ashley Greedy finally finishes his globe-trotting but the 17-year-old from Tonyrefail in the Rhondda may not be calling South Wales 'home' for much longer if he can realise his dream and base himself in the USA.

The PAR Homes teenager, a multiple British youth champ, is already a regular on both sides of the Channel and the Atlantic in his search for glory. "I was looking for top 15 in the British last year and got 13th so I reached my aims but I'm determined to move into the top 10 this year and I want to qualify at the GPs I can get to and I'm going for the win in the U21s this summer. There are a few good riders but I think it will be a battle between me and Kristian Whatley. We have battled all through the youth and we'll be going at it again this summer.

"But I see my future in America. That's my aim but I'm happy doing what I'm doing at the moment, chipping away, having a go. I was out there last month and everything is so much better in America, it's so much easier to get people to help you out and the tracks are safer. I raced the first round of the Winter Ams at Gatorback and finished fourth in the four-strokes and sixth in the 250 A.

>>





With Prince
at Dortmund
Marvin Musquin



Ashley in action
at Lierop



Ash in a dash
at Dortmund



Donington '07 – the Welsh
teenager's hoping for lots
more GP experience this year

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© Sutty

"I intend going out there to establish myself through the amateur ranks, starting from nothing and building my reputation there in local races and the amateur Nationals like Loretta Lynn's. Mum and dad are backing me to go over there. They've got a taxi firm with 21 cars and they're 100 per cent behind me."

So why stay another year in the UK? "I've stayed on at school in the sixth form to do my A levels in PE and resistant materials. That gives me a back-up for later life in case it doesn't happen, I think that's important."

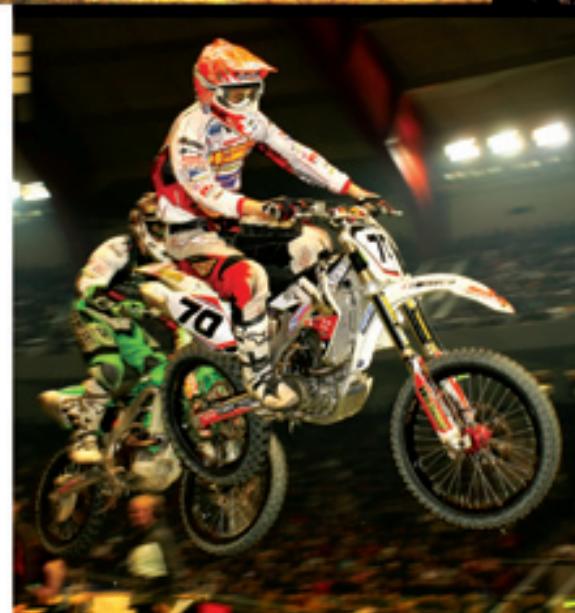
Ashley also believes his skills will suit America. "I prefer SX – I like all the jumps – but I like long races too because I believe I have good stamina rather than short bursts of speed."

He has successfully contested the Dutch indoor races at Goes and has been a regular in the German arenas since January last year. "Dortmund '07 was my first race in Germany but I've been back for every one since. I enjoyed Dortmund. The riding was good, the track was good, the opening show was good

and the Waldmann team were amazing. They helped me out with everything I needed from the word go and they've been doing that ever since. They asked me back to do all of the other races after that first weekend and I was glad to accept. It worked both ways because I have had podiums at every race."

"It's all good experience and I think it shows I am dedicated to putting the effort in to get to the races, to gain experience and learn – but I don't see Germany as my future. America is the place to be and I'm looking at basing myself in Florida. It's a different world to at home, a good experience."

Ashley is not the first of the current crop of UK youngsters to head Stateside – Adam Chatfield's been over there for a few years while Steven Clarke's another US regular – and the Welshman doesn't think he will be the last. "I think there are plenty of other British teenagers who have the same vision as me – to succeed in America, to chase the same dream. Perhaps there'll be quite a UK community out there in a few years."



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ROCKY'S DAD – THAT'S SWIFT SUZUKI'S NEW SIGNING BRAD ANDERSON –
HAS THE RACING PEDIGREE TO RUN AT THE FRONT OF THE PACK...

Words and photos by Sutty

Son of a beach! Brad puts the Swift Suzuki through its paces at a top secret Teeside test facility!





FAVOURITE THINGS...

BRADLEY'S BEST BITS BABY!

Drink – "Relentless"

Food – "Pasta"

Track – "Hawkstone"

Rider – "Stefan Everts"

CD – "Awww, ***king 'ell, what sort of a question is that? The Rocky album I suppose and I like Pink, she's quite cool"

Celebrity – "Angelina Jolie"

Car – "Black Hummer with chrome wheels or a Porsche 911 turbo"

Film – "Rocky or Gladiator"

Item of clothing – "G-Star jeans"

Book/Magazine – "DBR of course!"

Biscuit – "Jammie Dodgers"

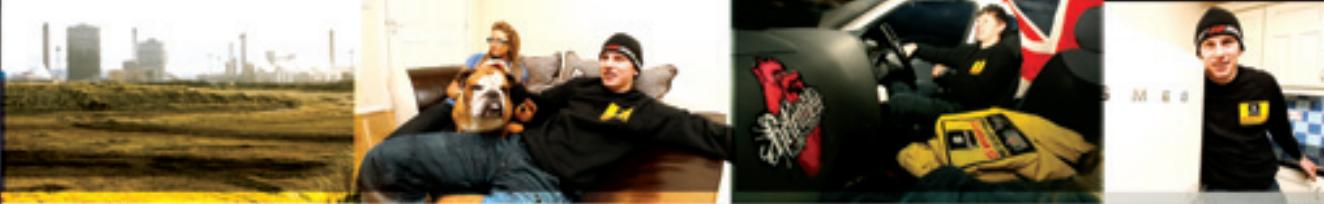
Chocolate bar – "Galaxy"

Animal – "Rocky my British Bulldog"

Result – "Lyng – Maxxis round 2007"

Place – "Tow Law or Australia (not the Rockies then? – AS)"

BR DR



Hi my name's Brad. I race motocross, it's my job and my life... I live and breathe motocross." Although it reads something like a singles ad, Brad Anderson's Myspace 'About me' pretty much hits the nail slap bang on the bonce and sums up the 26-year-old perfectly.

After pedalling his pants off to a European BMX title at the age of seven the tenacious young terror from Tow Law figured motocross was much more fun and traded in his 20in pushrod for a KX60 then never looked back. A full 19 years on and Ando's preparing for his first full season as a fully-fledged GP racer with Swift Suzuki – life has never been sweeter...

Before signing for Swift, 2007 was an up and down year for Brad racing for the Pioneer Yamaha team owned by legendary Londoner Roy Emberson. Initially joining the team for the '05 season – fresh from winning the KWS 125cc Pro championship on a two-stroke Bikesport KTM – the pair gelled instantly. "Me and Roy are like the same person in a way because we both don't give a ***k – we just get on," reckons Ando and success soon followed. Bringing home the British four-stroke championship in '05 and '06 with a British Masters title thrown in for good measure, Brad's best year of all actually came last year when he didn't win a bean – well not a championship anyway...

"Results wise, speed wise and the fact

that I stayed injury free means it probably was my best year ever but the stator problem with the bike put a bit of a downer on it and definitely cost me my third four-stroke title."

While the pesky problem only caused Anderson to DNF one moto of the Maxxis British championship it frequently dogged the Pioneer Yamahauler throughout the British four-stroke series where Anderson had a frustrating win-or-push-it-to-the-pits scorecard.

"Even before the stators started breaking down I was telling my mechanic Mike [Foster] that I didn't really want to do the four-stroke series because I was taking the pee by winning quite easily. It was obviously very important to the team sponsors that I won the four-stroke championship again – which is something I respect – but as soon as we knew that I couldn't win the title because of all the breakdowns we were then able to miss the remaining rounds and go to the GPs instead."

A rousing opening ride at Teutschenthal's GP of Germany netted the North Easterner a superb 11th in moto one but the stators of doom continued to haunt Brad in both France and Belgium when the #60 Yamaha rider was battling on the brink of the top-10 – it was just gonna be one of them years. But as well as offering Anderson yet more opportunities to improve his fitness by pushing his bike back to the pits the GPs served a much more useful purpose.

"The few GPs I did brought on my

speed no end. But the real bonus was that more and more teams were noticing me. It was pretty common knowledge by then that my stators were going and that the DNFs weren't my fault."

While Brad's efforts in the GPs were undoubtedly impressive it was surely his domestic form that had interested teams ringing his phone off the hook come the end of the season. "Aye, the British went pretty well," claims Brad. "I got the holeshot in the first race of the first round at Canada Heights and I thought 'eh up, what's going on here like?'. It was my first time on a 450 in the Maxxis and I tensed up letting Billy, Ken and Crockard past me. I ended up fourth but between races I came up with the realisation that I could actually do it and I held it together for a second – I was well pleased with that."

After a so-so round two which included the first of the stator breakdowns everything came good at Lyng for round three with Anderson and the Pioneer team celebrating a long awaited overall win but one that Brad's not totally over the moon with.

"In my opinion it wasn't a proper win. In the first race De Dycker passed me for the lead and he was going good but his exhaust broke up – he was given a one-minute time penalty and that gave me my first Maxxis moto win. In the second race I held off Noble to win the overall – my first ever at this level. To be honest I was happy with it but in my opinion I didn't win it fair and square – if I had I'd have been really pumped. >>



"That win pushed me on to the next round at Langrish where I had a really good battle with De Dycker in the first race. I was riding confident and although Ken pulled away a little bit by the end I was sure I could do it again in the second race." But when Keeno faltered at the start of moto two it was MacKenzie who Brad had his hands full with instead.

"Billy got out front and we both pushed very hard and kept about the same gap throughout the race. Billy said himself that it was one of the hardest races he's ever had and he took the overall with a 3-1 over my 2-2 – I'd have actually got the overall if Crockard's chain hadn't broken in moto one when he was running third ahead of Billy with one lap to go."

To put into perspective just how great Brad's ride at Langrish really was you've got to remember that just one week earlier MacKenzie had seriously spanked the world's best at Sugo in Japan. "Billy was definitely bringing the confidence of his Japanese win with him," recalls

Anderson. "He said himself that he was really pumped for that weekend and after being able to battle with him – one week after he won a GP and on such a mental high – really made me think." It obviously made others think too and it wasn't long after before a deal with the Swift Suzuki team was signed, sealed and delivered.

"The Pioneer team and I parted on good terms and both Roy and Mike have said that if I ever want to go back I'm more than welcome. I know what happened with the stators was just one of those things and to be fair the team were doing everything they could to stop the problem including fitting a new one for every race. But at the end of the day Pioneer Yamaha just couldn't offer me a full GP ride, Swift can and they're also a really good team – one of the most professional outfits out there and they're only going to get bigger and better."

With the new team comes a new bike and with that new bike comes some new – to motocross at least – technology. Unproven so far

off-road, Electronic Fuel Injection is the next big thing in dirt bike technology and Suzuki have got there first with it fitted as standard on the '08 RM-Z450. "I really like my new 450 but it's really taking some getting used to as with the EFI the power's right there so when I land off jumps or go through whoops I've just got to watch what I'm doing. If I grab too much throttle I hang off the back like my Ma's washing. It's okay though, I'm starting to get used to it now so I'll be ready for kicking some people's arses."

So you're not nervous at all then Brad? "Nah, if you get nervous the job's knackered. To be honest I can't see why I can't be in the top 10 in the world – I've just got to get out of the gate and show them I can mingle. If you think about it I was the only rider at the front of last year's British championship who wasn't doing the full GP season and I was running with and sometimes beating GP race winners like Ken and Billy so I know I can do it."





DBR CRIBS

HANGIN' WITH THE ANDERSONS...

THE EXTERIOR

Both: "It's really cold out here – can we go inside please..."

THE KITCHEN

Hayley: "Brad doesn't spend much time in here – he does no cooking, no cleaning and no washing up."

Brad: "It's a woman's job ain't it? How cool is my Smeg fridge?"

THE LIVING ROOM

Brad: "We put a wooden floor in and a plasma and fireplace and just done it out good really. This is where we spend most of our time watching TV with Rocky."

TOP O' THE STAIRS

Brad: "The stairs is where I like to hang some of my old jerseys, favourite pictures, magazine covers I've appeared on and my four-stroke championship certificates. I've given a lot of my trophies to Roy so he can stick them in his office."

Hayley: "We've got a couple of helmets painted by 12 Inch that I bought for Brad's birthday. One has Rocky painted on and the other is me in a basque on one side with some gambling chips on the other. We've also added each of Brad's four-stroke titles and there's more space for when he wins more too."

THE BATHROOM

Brad: "This is where I spend most of my time reading on the toilet or in the bath..."

Hayley: "Seriously, he'll spend hours in the bath with his laptop on the side looking at the internet."

Brad: "And when I get out I've had it so hot I'm dehydrated to hell so I have to shout for Hayley to get me a drink."

Hayley: "It's usually three pints of water – at the very least."

HAYLEY'S DRESSING ROOM

Hayley: "This is where I keep all my shoes, clothes, make-up, hair stuff and bits. I said to Brad I'm not moving in unless I get my own dressing room because I've got that much stuff at my Mam's I wanted to bring it all over with me."

THE BEDROOM

Hayley: "When we moved here there was a big double wardrobe but we had to split it to put the telly in the middle."

Brad: "Aye, when we put it in it was too low like so we had to move it a little higher so we can watch it in bed."

Monday



Tuesday



Wednesday



Thursday



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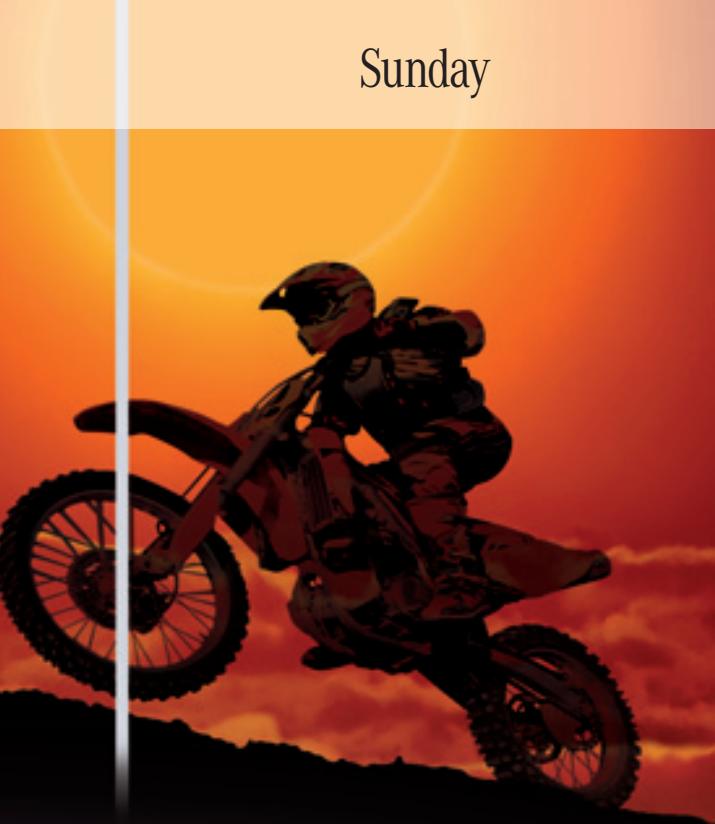
Friday



Saturday



Sunday



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GENERATION X!

DBR'S DEVILISHLY DEVIANT WHITE VAN MAN CHECKS OUT A PAIR OF DASHING NEW MODELS FROM MERCEDES – THE VITO SPORT AND SPORT X

Words by Sutty Photos by Sutty and Pete Robain

It's Monday morning and although you're aching from the three 25-minute motos you pounded out on Sunday the sweet taste of the weekend's success is still lingering on your lips. That's until you jump in your 60-foot motorhome with workshop, commute to the town centre then try and park up at the office – it's never gonna happen in that thing is it?

Vehicular choice is a frustrating thing for most dirt bike riders who'd much rather fork out on a bling pair of spare wheels for their dirt bike than for a second set of wheels – and a car to go on 'em – for themselves and their family to use during the week.

While we might claim to eat, drink and breathe motocross there are times when we need to do stuff that just isn't moto related – like go to the supermarket or drop the kids off at the pool – which creates something of a conundrum. Do we choose a vehicle that's suitable for weekly errand running – which means we go racing on a Sunday with our bikes strapped to the tailgate of a rep-mobile – or purchase the motorhome of our dreams for weekends away at the track then struggle with the damn thing between races.

Hmmm. It's a tough one to call...

Of course between these two extremes are a plethora of midsize options from a selection of vehicle manufacturers including Ford, Volkswagen and Mercedes Benz.

The Ford Transit is claimed to be the 'backbone of Britain' – by Ford's PR department at least – and the Trannie can commonly be seen driven by tradesmen and delivery drivers all around and up n' down the country. They're good, functional vans but nowt oh-so special plus they'll always have the stigma of being the 'White Van Man's' weapon of choice.

Volkswagen raise the bar with their Transporter range and especially the Sportline model. The Sportline looks the dangly boys and sat nestling under the bonnet is torquetastic 174PS (one PS is equal to 0.9863201 HP – you do the math) diesel engine which gets you from A to B quicker than you'd ever make it in a Trannie! Eibach suspension springs, a lower spoiler with integrated front fog lights and 18ins alloys along with body coloured door handles, bumpers and mirrors complement the vehicle's distinctive styling.

Also coming from the home of sausages and sauerkraut is the Mercedes Benz Sport and Sport X Dualiner models. The 115 Sport Dualiner and its even racier brother the 204HP Sport X Dualiner share more personalities than your schizophrenic grandmother. Not only are they excellent workhorses – we used our Sport Dualiner for everything from going riding, taking trash to the tip and delivering boxes and things – but they're also perfectly useful for nipping to the shop, scooting across the Yorkshire Dales to meet a buddy or for that full-family trip to visit your grandmother's equally barmy sister, the one who's so crazy she thinks she's one of Napoleon's generals – bonjour Great Aunt Violet!

The Sport comes with six seats – that's one for the driver and one each for five passengers – in a people carrier style layout. If you're not carrying so many passengers it's possible to remove one, two or even all three seats from the rear. And the best thing is that it doesn't seem to matter how much you're carrying because the Sport and Sport X can handle the lot with a ton of torque available on demand from the 2.15 litre (Sport) and 3 litre (Sport X) Mercedes

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The Ford Transit is claimed to be the backbone of Britain – by Ford's PR department at least – and the Transit van commonly be seen driven by tradesmen and delivery drivers.

Suzuki RM-Z450

Fuel injection



RM-Z450



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powerplants and their sweet handling chassis which is exactly the same throughout the range.

One way in which they differ is the gearbox. The Sport comes with a manual six-speeder while the Sport X is only available as an automatic with Tiptronic gear control. I personally prefer driving 'stick' and missed the clutch pedal while I was driving the Sport X – boohoo! However, the Sport X makes up for a lack of third pedal by coming with blingier wheels – Brabus 18 inchers – and bumper so it's all equal in the end.

The Vito now comes with rear wheel drive which makes for a tighter turning circle, better weight distribution, more efficient weight transfer under acceleration – that means there's basically more weight placed on the driven wheels under acceleration for increased grip – and the general handling, braking and towing

properties are improved considerably over the earlier shape models.

As a previous owner of a clunky Vito 112Cdi – well until the fuel pump pooped out on me and it was uneconomical to get the racing machine back on the road – it's obvious to see how much of an improvement the new shape model is. For starters the quality of drive is greatly improved but there's much more to celebrate including masses of extra space in the engine bay making servicing a breeze for experienced diesel technicians – the old Vito was a bit of a pig to work on – and they also look much meaner.

On the flip side the new aesthetically pleasing contours cause problems for us dirty dirt bikers. Whereas the old Vito used to easily hold three bikes and plenty of kit due to its elongated cube-like shape, the new sexed up model is what Wakker would call a knuckle crusher as a bike

with fully unloaded suspension fitted with highish bend bars needs coaxing through the gap rather than shoving straight in – think of it being a little like foreplay – unless you wanna leave a bit of knuckle on the ceiling.

And because the loading area is now narrower at the top, fitting a pair of bikes in bar-to-bar is infinitely more difficult than before – there's only one man more disappointed by this than I and that's Art Eckman.

Seriously though, the Sport and Sport X Dualiners are pretty much the perfect weapon for day-to-day blatting about in the week and then loading up with bikes, bits and bodies for a dirty weekend bash. For someone like me who needs to cover a lot of miles on a week-to-week basis but also needs something big enough to go racing in on the weekend the Merc's ideal – now where did I put my wallet?



DIRTY WEEKEND!

WHY WHEELDON'S WICKED...

A major part of the Mercedes 'test' was loading up a Paul Edmondson replica Suzuki RM250 into our Vito of love, raggaging it down the M5 from Avromouth to deepest Devon before spending a couple of days with the splendidly friendly Savery brothers Andy and Jim at their amazingly amazing Wheeldon Farm off-road centre.

Situated slap bang in the middle of a hundreds of miles of perfectly legal green lanes, Wheeldon Farm has everything an off-road rider could ever want within spitting distance of the immaculate on-site accommodation. Boasting a heated swimming pool, games room, pool table and spectacular views of the Devon countryside, the real jewel in Wheeldon's crown as the king of UK off-road facilities is a 30,000 square foot indoor arena – the only one of its kind left in the UK.

With training from ACU-approved coaches available for absolutely everyone from seven-year-old novices to vastly experienced grown-ups and all the safety kit and machinery included, it's possible to spend as little as an afternoon to as long as a week as a guest at Wheeldon.

I was fortunate enough to spend an afternoon with the Savery brothers acting as a paying punter – Mercedes picked up the bill (suckers) – at one of their amazing off-road experience events. Jim and Andy's people skills are amazing and they more than adequately explain all the ins and outs of off-road riding in a totally non-patronising and entertaining manner which soon had everyone riding safely around their indoor arena.

With a wide choice of immaculately maintained Suzuki bikes on offer from 70cc minibikes to 250cc motocross and enduro weapons there's something for absolutely everyone. Without blowing Wheeldon's trumpet too loudly I seriously believe every off-road rider from absolute amateur to seasoned pro would both learn something and enjoy themselves immensely during an afternoon with Jim and Andy.

The main aim of the first day's training was to adequately prepare us for a morning spent trail riding on the Fast Eddy replica RMs. After being familiarised with the RMs a little extreme enduro style training – hopping over tyres and railway sleepers etc – had our small but perfectly formed group of Daimler's Simon Wood and Fast Bikes' art editor Andy Saunders ready to safely hit the trails in a safe and respectful – to other lane users – manner.

So after a grand night's sleep in one – I can't remember which one but it was very nice – of the Wheeldon cottages we kitted up and hit the trails in the pouring rain. Despite the weather being crappier than a nippie's week old nappy a great time was had by all and we even got a friendly welcome from ramblers, dog walkers and horse riders alike.

I'd like to thank Mercedes, Jim and Andy Savery as well as all their beautiful staff members – yup, even the mechanic dude – for introducing the Wheeldon facility and all the wondrous things it does to me. I seriously can't convey how great a place it is so check out www.wheeldontwo.co.uk for more information and photo goodness.



the tough one

RAMBO V!

IT'S THE HARDEST, MADDEST, MOST INTENSE TWO HOURS
YOU'LL EVER SPEND ON A BIKE AND THERE'S ONLY ONE
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THE TOUGH ONE – AND IT SURE AIN'T SLY STALLONE...

Words by SEAN LAWLESS Photos by SUTTY

Death by Crippsy! Andy takes
aim at DBR's Deputy Dawg



Knighter makes it four wins from four at The Tough One

Pre-event favourite David Knight is off-road biking's equivalent of America's #1 gung-ho Vietnam vet – hard-as-nails, uncompromising and merciless when he goes in for the kill. He's the sort of bloke who'd crash hard in the woods, Superglue shut a gashed femoral artery, live on small rodents until he'd regained enough strength to continue and still cross the line first. In short, he is The Tough One!

So it's no huge surprise that despite an all-star cast including new extreme enduro hero Taddy Blazusiak, reigning Hell's Gate champ Wayne Braybrook, four-time world enduro champ Paul Edmondson, British enduro champ Tom Sagar and Dakar legend Cyril Despres, it's DK who runs out a comfortable winner a full nine minutes ahead of his Polish factory KTM team-mate and Braybrook who's a lap down in third.

"There was a lot more competition this year and everyone had hyped it up," reckons Knighter after the post-race fireworks. "The support was unreal, everyone was cheering me on and I didn't stop for a breath. Halfway into the race I relaxed a bit and took a few saver lines that were a little bit slower but a bit safer. It worked out good."

But Knighter doesn't have it all his own way and for the first half of the Main Event he's chasing Michael Brown who's competing thanks to his brilliant win in the earlier Speed Trials comp. Admittedly, the two-and-a-half mile course is basically one long, hard section so Michael's trials iron is the weapon-of-choice but the Mighty Atom is riding out of his skin at the front before he's forced to pull in after an hour.

"I'd have definitely gone faster on a trials bike," adds DK. "The second half of the track I could catch him easily enough but he would make that much time on the early bits like over the logs. It was good that they said he could only do an hour otherwise we'd have the American situation in indoors where it might as well become a trial – no-one would ride an enduro bike. But it helped me to be honest because it dragged me on a little bit – I was riding quicker than I would have over the dodgy stuff like the logs and slippery rocks."

>>



Rob Pollard tops the Expert division

“What do you mean 'one' of the most violent movies of all time? It 'is' the most violent movie of all time!" Sylvester Stallone's claim for Rambo IV may be true for the moment – but he's going to have to eat his words (along with his regular side of human growth hormone) when the DVD of the 2008 The Tough One comes out!

Nantmawr Quarry may be a million miles away from the Burmese rainforests (actually, more like 6051 according to the internet) but smiling Scouse sadist Steve Ireland's latest blockbuster features a pretty similar body count. And while Rambo IV must have taken, ooh, months to film, Wirral Off-Road's painfest is all over in a single afternoon. Now that's much more bang for your bucks!

And bang for your bucks is what it's all about. This year's two-hour Main Event starts earlier so only the last 15 or so minutes take place in darkness, giving spectators more to see. Combine this with an extended Speed Trials event and you've got serious value for money.

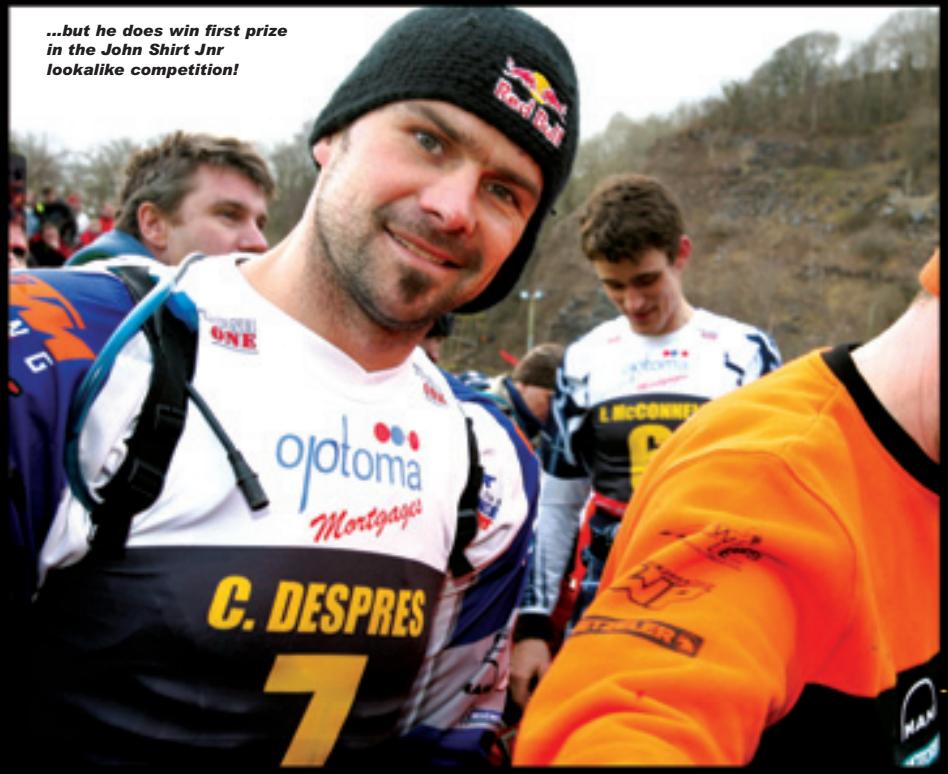
It wouldn't be The Tough One without an endless series of natural and man-made obstacles that push men and machines up to and beyond breaking point and for 2008 Steve and his torture team excel themselves. Giant earth mover tyres, super-slippery logs, case-cracking rocks, evil climbs and in particular one near vertical descent that carries the unwary straight into the bowels of hell all serve to give the UK spares market a post-Christmas windfall.

the tough one

Dakar hero Cyril Despres is more at home in the dunes of Africa than on the rocks of Wales...



...but he does win first prize in the John Shirt Jnr lookalike competition!



The best parts of the course – for the spectators if not for the riders – are the tyres, the logs and a super-snotty hillclimb that gets worse as the race progresses. But it's the section down the side of a quarry wall that provides the most entertainment. Tackled confidently with both feet on the pegs it's actually a lot worse than it looks but even the slightest bit of indecision results in bike breaking, arse-over-tit moments – especially near the bottom where the line splits into two around a rocky outcrop.

As the light dims and with the descent rutting up it goes from bad to worse. It's a walk in the park for the top men – especially those with solid trials experience – but even riders with the skills of everyone's favourite loon Rob Wrayford have a few hairy moments. And it's Rabbit who pulls off the save of the day on his final lap. Halfway down he's more out-of-shape than a 60-a-day, 70-stone shut-in and heading for a date with his maker before a big handful of throttle carries him off the middle of the bottom lip to a chorus of 'ooohs', 'ahhhhs' and '*****g hells'...

With his trials background Braybrook's slightly smoother than Wrayford and the Gas Gas rider's cool and composed at the finish. "I can't grumble. For me to be on the podium here it's like mission accomplished. It's my trials experience that's got me through for sure, without that I wouldn't have got the result I have done."

"I haven't done any training or practising this time. All I've done is keep pace all day. I haven't pushed at any point, all I've done is just kept the same pace. And that's all I could've done but it's paid off. It's such a physical, tough event – it's a race that really does sap your energy."



Gordy borrows a Gasser and cracks right on



British enduro champ Tom Sagar's fifth Pro home



Gordy sucks!

GO, GO GORDY! CROCKARD HANGS TOUGH

GP star turned GNCC hopeful Gordon Crockard's in action at Nantmawr as part of the preparations for his move Stateside where he's picked up a BMW factory ride. Armed with a Steve Plain-prepped Gasser, the Ulsterman's banking on his MX speed and off-season trials skills to get him to the finish.

"I got a great start. I was right at the very back of the holding area so there were a load of bikes to go through but I came round the first lap maybe third or fourth ahead of Paul Eddy who was going faster than me. I don't know whether he thought I was an Expert rider or what but he was yelling and screaming and he really put me off. I got really nervous and got the worst arm-pump up ever. I was riding like a complete novice.

"At the end of the first lap you go over these earth mover tyres and I thought 'no problem, just trials ride it up the top and keep it on the back wheel and pop off the other side' but the back tyre just spun and I had the biggest over-the-bars crash ever. I landed in a big puddle, ruined my goggles and gloves and smashed my helmet light which then knocked off the side of my helmet like a hammer the whole race. The arm-pump kicked in and I rode terrible for 40 minutes.

"At the end it was a piece of cake but at the beginning I was absolutely horrific. I didn't know how to ride the tyres – it took me about six laps to work those out. I didn't know how to ride the logs – I got the hang of those after about four or five laps. It just took me so long to get my lines – I was so cross with myself once I worked out the good lines. Some of them came by people pointing and once I got the track sussed and the technique to ride it then I found it really good and really enjoyed it.

"There was one massive downhill and I was very nervous about it, obviously I didn't want to get hurt and it was risky – I thought it was a little bit too dangerous for the riders. If your feet came off the pegs at all you were definitely having a huge crash. I didn't like it but everything else I really enjoyed although some of the really tight, nadgery stuff was pointless. It was a wrestling session.

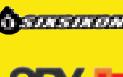
"I knew today I wasn't going to be a contender and I didn't actually try to be a contender. I've never rode with a trials tyre on the back of a motocrosser before – I'd have actually preferred an enduro tyre but it's the old story that once one guy puts one on and tries it everyone ends up on the same. Knighter's done all that, he's been through learning the ropes, he knows it so well and he's fantastic at it. But he's got a huge reputation that he has to hold, I've got nothing to lose – it's all there to take – it's just not going to happen overnight. I didn't expect it to. The guys are that good.

"I was annoyed I didn't beat Cyril Despres, he's a hero of mine. I kept passing him, then falling off, then passing him, then falling off again. I really wanted to beat him. Then on the last lap about 500 metres from the end he got by me because someone got stuck in front of me."

Taddy can't catch Knighter...



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Area 51



Geoffrey improves his power to weight ratio but it still ain't enough

CLASS ACT...

...THAT'S THE EVENT, NOT WAKKER!

Words by Geoff Walker

Absolute class... That's the only way I can describe the now legendary 'The Tough One'. This was my second time at the race and Steve Ireland and his tireless WOR team cracked it again and moved up another level from last year. Smooth organisation and a quite simply bonkers course makes for a world class event on our doorstep.

My entry as the #24 Pro made me a little nervous to say the least and after checking the stacked entry I had a blend of excitement and toilet visits to keep me busy in the build-up! My Las Vegas experience in November had kept me off the awesome little KTM 250 EXC for two months so Fast Eddy helped me out with an entry into the first round of his cross country series the week before the T1. A couple of hours riding in the stickiest mud on earth was mega fun but didn't do my groin area much good! Thanks Edmo, you are the man!

The highlight of any event for the crowd is usually the start and the WOR crew came up with a plan to have every bike sitting with a wheel out before the start so when the flag dropped it had to be popped back in before departure. There was a lot of tension in the build up but this was the only bit I had confidence in! The wheel almost went in perfectly and but for the right side adjuster block not popping in instantly I'm sure a holeshot was there for the taking!

With the Experts already on track the trouble began at the first log section and never really ended. It was carnage with bikes and bodies everywhere and then a bad landing on the seat of the Toomer on lap one drove one of my hairy boys up towards my liver and it refused to come back down to play. My ball had taken its ball home!

After another two laps I stopped and helped my mate Boundsy fix his brake for a while as I tried in vain to get shot of the nut pain. It wasn't going away and the groin strain was getting to the point where I couldn't lift my leg to start the bike. I did get to the chequered flag but only after a lot of sitting around and gulping...

What can I say about the people who come to watch this event? They make it what it is! They are the stars of the show and it is our job as riders to go out there and entertain them whatever way we can. It's an honour to crash in front of everyone and get a round of applause for it and, believe me, I did plenty of crashing and got my share of applause!

The Tough One is a pleasure/pain race and even though I'm writing this feeling like I've been run over by a truck I'm smiling from ear to ear at the fact that I was given the opportunity to once again go and race with the best in the world. Thanks to Steve and his team (sorry about my poor performance) and congratulations to every rider and spectator for getting out there and making this event a world leader in extreme enduro. Oh and Knighter - you are an animal!

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SPEED TRIALS

mighty atom's up and at 'em

After its successful debut last year, WOR bring back the Speed Trials race. There's no clear favourite among the ranks of the feet-up men but '07 winner Steve Colley's back for more, Graham Jarvis also fancies his chances and teen talent Alexz Wigg chooses the event to debut his new Mont four-banger.

But as the trials irons get off the line it's Beta UK's Michael Brown who sets the pace at the front from the more experienced (okay, we mean 'older') Graham Jarvis. Once he's up to second and with his extreme enduro pedigree the MRS Sherco man should be – on paper at least – the man to beat over the 90-minute race. But Brown's flying and steadily pulls away.

With Grimbo gradually dropping back and Colley regretting his decision to run a mousse in the front wheel of his Gasser that dings him off every rock in the quarry, John Boy's Boy Wonder comes home first ahead of Jarvis and Wigg.

"It was surprisingly not so bad until just before the end when I knew I had a fair lead," explains Michael at the finish. "I stopped pushing a little bit and it started to kick in – my back's hurting now – but apart from that it was fine. It's hard standing up all that time, especially when you hit something and it jars your back. I do a fair bit for the trials in the gym and I've been up Scarborough this week doing similar courses so it's been good preparation."

Grimbo still looks relatively fresh by the end but decides to give the two-hour enduro a swerve. "It was definitely really hard work. I had a bad start and got tangled up with a few to begin with but fair play to Michael. He was quick. I was fighting with him for a bit but he was just quicker than me in a few places. Age is my first excuse but I've got a few more!"



Grimbo pilots the four-popper Sherco to second in the Speed Trials event



Off-road legend Fast Eddy gets fourth on a 125cc



His Mont debut ends in a podium finish for Alexz Wigg



Michael Brown ain't hanging around

RESULTS

PRO

1	David Knight (KTM)	14 laps
2	Taddy Blazusiak (KTM)	14
3	Wayne Braybrook (Gas Gas)	13
4	Paul Edmondson (Suzuki)	13
5	Tom Sagar (KTM)	12
6	Paul Bolton (Honda)	12
7	Cyril Despres (KTM)	12
8	Gordon Crockard (Gas Gas)	12
9	Greg Evans (KTM)	11
10	Juan Knight (Gas Gas)	11

EXPERT

1	Rob Pollard (KTM)	11 laps
2	Lee Sampson (Husqvarna)	8
3	Rob Reese (KTM)	8
4	Wayne Mundell (KTM)	8
5	Gordon Clarke (TM)	7

CLUBMAN

1	Kevin Harris (KTM)	6 laps
2	Thomas Hick (Husqvarna)	6
3	Joe Deakin (KTM)	6
4	Gary Daniels (KTM)	6
5	Gary McCoy (KTM)	6

GAS GAS SPEED TRIAL

1	Michael Brown (Beta)	12 laps
2	Graham Jarvis (Sherco)	12
3	Alexz Wigg (Montesa)	12
4	Sam Connor (Beta)	12
5	Ross Danby (Gas Gas)	12
6	Steve Colley (Gas Gas)	12
7	Sam Haslam (Gas Gas)	12
8	Lee Sampson (Sherco)	12
9	Jack Challoner (Beta)	11
10	Gary Jenkins (Sherco)	11

 For more of Sutton's pics from The Tough One go to www.dirtbikerider.com and follow the links to the gallery

DR EVIL!

SADISTIC STEVE

With the podium celebrations over we caught up with WOR's Steve Ireland for a quick fat chew to find out where he sees The Tough One heading.

"I only like to say what we are going to do, I don't want it to become a pipe dream and it fades away," says Steve between slurps of Stella. "I've got a gut feeling that indoors is the way it's going with this sort of extreme stuff. But I don't want to run normal extreme stuff – it's already been done. The Tough One had never been done in the UK and I'm sort of 'addicted' to doing the stuff that other people haven't done."

"I can't give you a proper answer as to where I see it going. I don't want The Tough One to die because I'm fiercely, fiercely proud of it and what we've achieved today I think is the biggest and best spectator enduro in the world. Last Man Standing you can't watch properly, Hell's Gate you can't watch properly – they're all 20, 30-mile loops. Here today they're racing in a two-and-a-half-mile loop and people have said to me they can't believe how many times they've seen Knighter go round."

Neil Drew is a former MX and enduro racer and a qualified sports mind coach. At present he is coaching two national champions and several GP competitors and has helped many amateur and professional athletes from all over the world. He can be contacted via DBR or through his website at www.competitionmind.co.uk

CONCENTRATION!

If you mind's not on the job then your hopes could very well end up on their arse...

Words by Neil Drew

VERY OFTEN in a race there's very little that actually separates close rivals. Over a 35-minute moto as little as one second can separate first and second place and the same gap can be the difference between 15th and 16th. Now you may think this one-second gap could be down to all sorts of things such as how trick the bike is, how fit the rider is or how skilled the rider is and you'd have a point – these factors can all play a part in where you finish a race. But if you put everyone on the same bog-stock bike I'd bet you'd still find similar time differences showing up.

So let's disregard machinery and consider what's happening in the mind. Well there are all the things we've talked about before and a whole bunch of others besides but one of the biggest factors is concentration. This helps a rider to gain consistency, it helps in the maintenance of focus which helps with relaxation, avoidance of distractions, coping with the venue and so many other things. To cover this scientific area we need a whole book to talk about it so we are keeping

things as brief but educational as possible.

Your brain can only take in a certain amount of information per second – there are a number of theories on this ranging from seven bits through to 164 bits of info per second but, for argument's sake, we will say that the brain can absorb 100 pieces of information per second.

For simplicity we will say that concentration can be split into four main areas which are...

- A)** Internal focusing on thoughts and feelings
- B)** Internal mentally organising information and rehearsing/visualising what is going to happen
- C)** External focusing on your immediate space
- D)** External focusing on the world and events around you in the big picture

...so which one do you think is the most important of these four when actually competing? Think about it for a moment before reading on rather than guessing.

If you said A) then clearly you were so

wrapped up in your emotions and thoughts that you forgot to consider where you were. If you said B) then you should have done it before the race. If you said C) then you would be competing with your eyes fixed looking below you studying how nice your outfit looks and how clever you are with your hands and feet. If you said D) then you would be absolutely right.

Think of it this way – your brain is a data processing tool that turns incoming information into external action. If you're travelling along a track at 40mph and you're focused on how you're feeling or thinking about who is behind you or looking at what your front mudguard is doing then you will have been reducing the amount of information that your brain has in order to co-ordinate your body and its reactions to what's ahead on the track. Naturally you'll have to slow down in order to be able to cope with the incoming information and process whatever else you're focusing on. Therefore you could say that you're only processing 30 bits of



information on the actual riding instead of the 100 bits that are available. So when competing our concentration and focus have to be almost exclusively external.

There is another part to concentration I want to cover and that is skill. It's true to say the vast majority of sports people get some form of technical training to enhance their skills. To gain maximum benefit from these skills they have to be trained into what's called our autonomic nervous system and our unconscious in such a way that we can carry out any given movement without having to apply conscious thought to it – that is we react automatically. When we are able to carry out a skill automatically without any thought being applied to it and we are externally focused then we have total concentration.

To get these techniques right and part of the autonomic and unconscious programming you can do a couple of things – either use a mind coach to teach you how or, if you're able to, rehearse any given technique slowly and

gradually build up your speed while practising the technique flawlessly.

The last thing we will cover on the subject of concentration is this – it isn't always the rider who's perfect the most amount of time that wins or is successful, it is the rider who makes the least amount of mistakes. Mistakes equal distractions and it's the amount of time taken to recover from a distraction and regain concentration that can often make the difference between winning and losing.

Time for an example. A couple of years ago I was asked to go to a race to help a competitor who was really struggling and way off his best. Every time he made a mistake and came off his bike he was furious – he would throw all his toys out the pram and have a big tantrum in front of the crowd so they could see he was doing his best, had made a mistake and was determined to do better. At this point he was then internally focused, his concentration was gone and it took nearly a lap for him to get his flow back.

Needless to say, that particular race was a write off. His championship hopes had long gone way before that particular race anyway and this was also making him anxious and angry because he also knew that he had to make a show for his sponsors – again, he was totally focused on the wrong thing.

To sum up, give yourself a fighting chance by ensuring your concentration is on the competition you are in and focusing on what is important. And practice your skills to make them second nature so conscious thought can be eliminated from those actions and, if you make any mistakes, get back to what you were doing and leave the mistake where it was made.

The most important thing, as always, is to enjoy your sport – on its own this creates better results. And if you're not enjoying it then work out why – ask yourself what you need to do to have that enjoyment – and do something about it rather than wallow in all those self-made distractions.



During practice Stewart was sporting some Rick Johnson retro riding gear before pulling out of the series after practice



Carmichael threw some fat whips over the track's large triple showing he still has it



David Bailey (middle) gets a shov-off as he rides a CRF250R out onto the track for a parade lap followed by his 1986 rival Rick Johnson (behind Bailey in the black-and-white Red Bull hat)



Ivan Tedesco had similar throwback gear to James Stewart but Tedesco wore it in the races



Doug Dubach (right), Broc Glover (middle) and Marty Tripes (left) watch the highlights of the 1986 Anaheim Supercross on the Jumbotron

RETRO RACERS!

THE ANAHEIM 2 THROWBACK NIGHT PAYS TRIBUTE TO ONE OF THE GREATEST RACES IN SUPERCROSS HISTORY...

Hardly a weekend goes by at the races without some old-school racer or long-time industry member waxing poetic about how much better it was 'back in the day'. Many of the old riders – such as Rick Johnson – talk about how much better the tracks were in their day. Many of the other industry people – such as Bevo Forte – will tell you how much more hardcore the riders were back in their day.

Well, supercross promoter Live Nation put their claims to the test with the first-ever 'throwback night' at Angel Stadium for round three of the Monster

Energy/AMA Supercross Championship. Track-builder Dirt Wurx built a replica of the 1986 Anaheim SX track which 22 years ago hosted one of the most legendary races in supercross history between new Honda team-mates Rick Johnson and David Bailey and nearly everyone who was anyone dressed up for the occasion, including a good number of the fans.

We could describe everyone's outfits to you but that would probably bore you to sleep even faster than normal. And it's waaaay easier just to show you – after all, a picture is worth a thousand words...

bi-weekly MX magazine – Motocross Illustrated – covering both AMA and GP action. He knows the sport and its personalities like few others and as our US Editor provides insight straight from the Stateside scene...

Steve Cox is an American moto-journalist who follows the entire AMA SX/MX tour. Since moving on from US weekly Cycle News he's struck out on his own to do the freelance thing and last year launched a new



Speed Network announcer Erin Bates got into the spirit of it all by wearing a ridiculously hot '80s outfit complete with fanny pack (that means something different here in America)



James Stewart and his man-friend Rado dressed the part during the track walk at Anaheim 2

Many of the manufacturers had their old factory bikes on display



Although not quite considered an '80s racer, Jeremy McGrath is the biggest legend of them all and he came back to run a couple of parade laps before the racing began



Rick Johnson tried to convince us that he had to search around his house for his old Bad Boy Club clothes but we know the truth – he wears them at home all the time



Jason Lawrence negotiates the track's sand section



Chad Reed got into the act



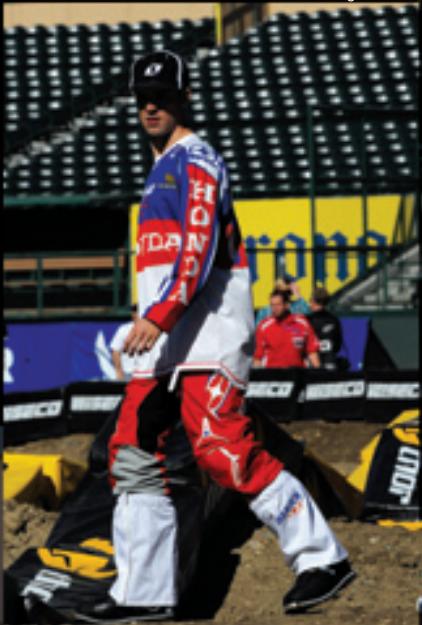
The 30-second-board girl looked like something straight out of a Madonna video



Davi Millsaps wasn't born in 1986 but he looked the part anyway



No Fear-sponsored Logan Darien sports an old-school look, complete with boot gators like Johnny O'Mara used to wear. All of the No Fear riders ran this same gear



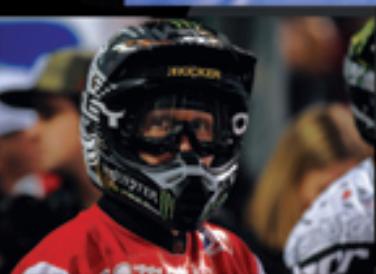
During the parade laps Jeremy McGrath threw a patented Nac-Nac over the track's larger-than-normal triple jump. Unlike in his heyday, this time MC pulled the trick on a thumper



Broc Glover (left) and Jeff Ward (right) discuss who was better – there are 13 AMA National Championships between the two of them, not counting Ward's AMA supermoto titles



Carmichael (centre), Scott Taylor (left) and Ben Townley (right, on crutches) share stories during the night's racing



AMA official Jay Mitowitz got into the spirit



Ricky Carmichael strapped his boots back on to join McGrath and Chad Reed on the opening parade laps



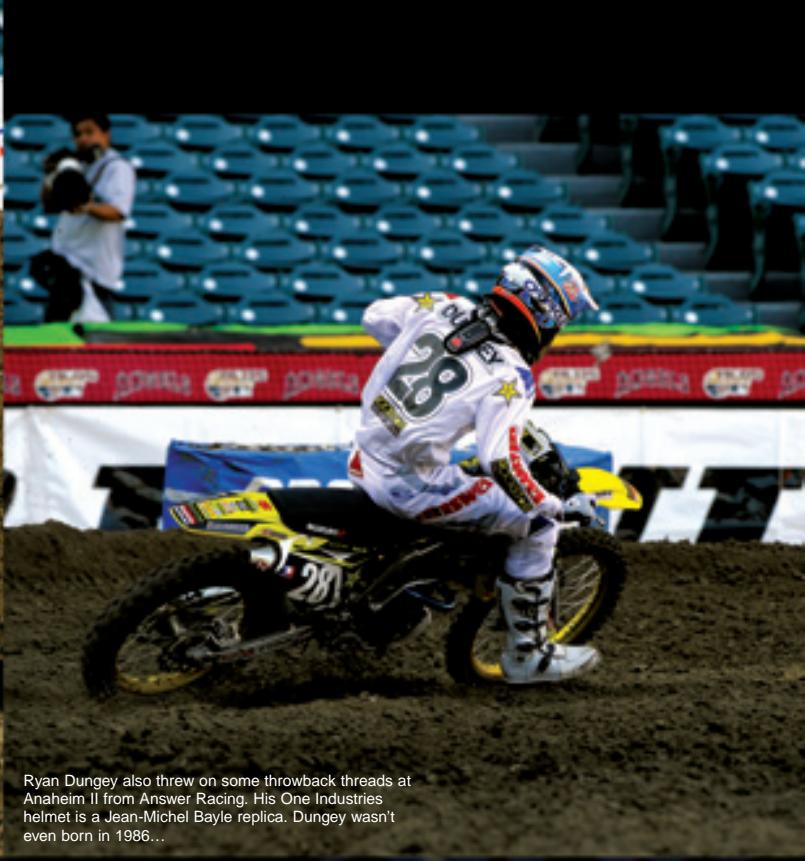
Mike Sleeter's KTM looked so authentic it was almost easy to mistake him for Trampas Parker

Reed's tribute to his favourite racer of all time, Jeremy McGrath. Reed wore the '80s-inspired Thor gear during practice and opening ceremonies but went back to his modern clothes for the races





Grant Langston got into the '80s spirit with some throwback MSR gear



Ryan Dungey also threw on some throwback threads at Anaheim II from Answer Racing. His One Industries helmet is a Jean-Michel Bayle replica. Dungey wasn't even born in 1986...

On the track Ferry even adopted an '80s riding style for the occasion



Dr Bodnar of the Asterisk Mobile Medical Center is in some of Tom Carson's old Can-Am gear, although it's unlikely his Segway was around 22 years ago

Mike Bell (right, in the yellow jacket) and Ron Lechien (left) watch the opening ceremonies



ONE HORSE RACE?

WITH STEWART OUT OF THE SERIES THE WAY'S CLEAR FOR CHAD REED TO CLAIM HIS SECOND AMA SX CROWN...

San Manuel Yamaha's Chad Reed headed into the 2008 Monster Energy/AMA Supercross Series knowing that he was the underdog in his quest to dethrone Monster Energy Kawasaki's James Stewart. He was certainly the top of the contenders but he was the underdog nonetheless.

After winning the opener in the mud at Anaheim 1 despite the odds, Chad Reed and the rest head to the desert of Phoenix and the roofed stadium at Chase Field. Some consider this to be the 'real' series opener since the actual first round was rained on.

Stewart gets the jump on the field at round two, followed closely by Reed. Reed immediately begins to pressure Stewart but can't make a pass stick and a couple of small mistakes knock Reed out of striking distance. That's how the race finishes up with Stewart out front, Reed only about two seconds back but the two of them more than a half-a-lap in front of third-placed Kevin Windham of the Torco Racing Fuels Honda team.

"Obviously, we all want to win Anaheim 1 but, to be honest, I was stoked on the win this week," Stewart says. "One thing I've noticed about myself lately is that I'm not forcing anything [getting lots of fibre, eh Bubba? – SL]. Obviously, last weekend at Anaheim wasn't my weekend so I understood that. I stayed up through the first corner at Phoenix so I knew I had a good shot. It was a good

win, for sure. I felt pretty good and I'm stoked."

It's obvious that something has changed with Stewart and it becomes more obvious at round three, back in Anaheim. After dropping out of both practices Stewart makes an announcement. "This is definitely tough," Stewart says. "The US Open was a little bit different because I wasn't in a championship but it's to the point now where my knee just wants to pop out. It has gotten worse and worse and I can't keep fighting it. I have to get it fixed."

With that Stewart drops out of the championship and his and Reed's 30-second leads over third place look to turn into a lot of blow-out wins by Reed over the rest of the field.

When the gate drops, Rockstar/Makita Suzuki's Mike Alessi grabs the holeshot but Reed immediately zaps him for the top spot and tries to run and hide. Yamaha's rookie 450cc pilot Josh Hill quickly moves into second and does his best to keep Reed honest out front but he can't get within striking distance and Reed goes on to his second straight win in Anaheim and moves out to a commanding points lead only three races into the championship. Hill hangs on for second and Windham grabs his second podium in a row in third.

From this point on Reed doesn't expect a challenge from any other riders. "Honestly, I think it's me and the track – just me going out there and trying to



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get the track down and trying to be consistent," Reed says of his competition. The series heads up the California coast to San Francisco for round four of the championship and the rain makes another uninvited appearance, soaking the track for days leading up to the race. The skies open back up just in time for the Main Events and Monster Energy Kawasaki's Timmy Ferry grabs the holeshot before immediately relinquishing the position to Windham who begins to stretch out a lead. However, while Windham rides out front Honda Red Bull's Davi Millsaps grabs second and Reed grabs third and both of them are jumping the track's two triples in the mud while Windham isn't – even though he was in his heat race which he won.

Before long Millsaps catches and passes Windham only to crash on his own out front, moments before Windham does likewise after reassuming the lead. The beneficiary is Reed who takes over the lead that no-one else seemed to want and goes on to win his third Main Event of the season.

"I was riding tentatively," Windham says. "Once I got out front I was trying so hard not to make a mistake that it cost me the win."

So Reed carries a 19-point lead into round five, the last race in Anaheim's Angel Stadium. Reed struggles all day in practice but grabs the holeshot in the Main Event in front of Millsaps, Ferry and Windham. Windham quickly moves

his way into second and begins to challenge Reed.

Just when it seems Reed is about to buckle under the pressure, Windham begins to drop back and eventually falls into the clutches of Millsaps and Ferry and then barely holds off Honda Red Bull's Andrew Short at the finish for fourth place. "I think it was around lap eight I got a flat front tyre," Windham says. "So, just for the record, I didn't fade because I'm out of shape because I know someone's going to accuse me of that. I got a flat front tyre and had to race the last half of the race with it."

Finishing fourth with a flat front tyre is impressive enough but things continue to fall in favour of Reed who wins his fourth Main Event of the season. "After last weekend I set some goals for myself and winning this third Anaheim was one of them," Reed explains. "I did a lot of starts this week and I want to thank the team and Andrew McFarlane – he's the holeshot king and he came out to the test track and helped me. I just put my head down. I knew if I got the holeshot this race would be all mine so I just got the start, rode a smart race, made a few mistakes but got the job done."

With the win Reed pulls out to a 26-point lead over Windham in the championship. Considering that a race win is worth only 25 points Reed has a commanding lead and there are still 12 rounds left to run.



SERIES STANDINGS

SUPERCROSS

1	Chad Reed	122 points
2	Kevin Windham	96
3	Timmy Ferry	77
4	Mike Alessi	69
5	Andrew Short	67
6	Davi Millsaps	65
7	Nate Ramsey	57
8	Ivan Tedesco	53
9	Nick Wey	53
10	Josh Hill	49



Fast-starting Mike Alessi holds down fourth in the SX class

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SERIES STANDINGS

LITES

1	Ryan Dungey	96 points
2	Jason Lawrence	88
3	Dan Reardon	80
4	Brett Metcalfe	78
5	Austin Stroupe	74
6	Tommy Hahn	70
7	Justin Brayton	69
8	Broc Hepler	59
9	Gavin Gracyk	53
10	Kyle Cunningham	47

A pair of bad results have seen Dungey's lead come tumbling



Lawrence gets a victory hug from ruggedly handsome Ryan Hughes



Metcalfe ploughs through the San Fran gloop

CLOSE ENCOUNTERS!

LAWRENCE COMES ON STRONG AS DUNGEY BOBBLES...

Makita Suzuki's Ryan Dungey could've, would've and should've had the Lites Eastern Regional SX title last year. He won the most races but had the most DNFs – although many of his bad nights could be put down to his rookie status. But this year he is no longer a rookie and after winning round one of the series in the mud at Anaheim 1 it looked like another year of Dungey's speed working for him.

However, it wasn't what was working for him in 2007 that cost him the championship, it was what was working against him.

In Phoenix, Torco Racing Fuels Honda's Jake Weimer grabs the holeshot but is quickly relegated to third behind Dungey out front and Yamaha's Broc Hepler in second. With Hepler and Dungey battling it out for the lead, Weimer is able to stay close to the duo until late in the race when Dungey is forced to double a triple, handing Hepler the lead and Weimer the runner-up spot. The very next lap Hepler goes down in a tight right-hand turn, handing Weimer the lead with Dungey on his tail.

Weimer holds Dungey off until the last lap when Dungey makes a move inside Weimer and Weimer is forced to elbow him back. As he does it they both lose their drive for the upcoming triple. Dungey chooses not to jump it while Weimer grabs a handful of throttle and seat-bounces the jump. That's all he needs and Weimer – who failed to make the Main at round one – wins his first ever Main Event.

Dungey turns it around at Anaheim 2 as he goes out and chases down

holeshot artist Austin Stroupe of the Monster Energy/Pro Circuit Kawasaki squad to take his second win of the season with Hepler moving through the field for second. However, Dungey's biggest championship rival to that point – Boost Mobile/Yamaha of Troy's Jason Lawrence – fails to finish the Main Event as his bike stalls in the opening laps and he's unable to restart it.

Dungey carries a nice points lead to round four but the mud in San Francisco throws him off his game. After a poor start, crashes keep him out of the front running and he finishes seventh while Lawrence leads every lap of the rain-shortened event to take his first ever professional race win in front of Motopark Kawasaki's Tommy Hahn and Monster Energy/Pro Circuit Kawasaki's Brett Metcalfe.

Dungey has an opportunity to sweep all three Anaheim SXs as the series heads back to Anaheim for the final time. However, Lawrence has new-found confidence. Stroupe grabs another holeshot but Lawrence moves into the lead on the opening lap while Dungey works his way through the pack from a horrible start, rounding lap one in 16th. By the time Dungey catches up to the Hahn brothers – Wil and Tommy – Wil gets out of control in the whoops and turns left in front of Dungey who lands on Wil's back and goes over the bars.

Dungey recovers for 11th but Lawrence leads every lap and the 19-point lead that Dungey entered the event with shrinks to eight points with only three rounds left to run with Lawrence now second and breathing down his neck.



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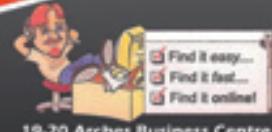
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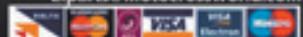
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IFS, BUTS, CANDY, NUTS!

OUR FAVOURITE CANADIAN (APART, OF COURSE, FROM CELINE DION) GIVES US A RUNDOWN OF HIS CONTENDERS AND PRETENDERS FOR THE '08 SX TITLE...

Words by STEVE MATTHES Photo by STEVE COX

Well, well, well – the 2008 Monster Energy SX series has certainly taken a bit of a turn don't you think? The runaway train of James Stewart came off the rails like Ozzy's Crazy Train when the defending series champion pulled out with a knee injury after winning the second round. It really was a shocking development but it is again the reason why you actually have to run the races to determine the champ. Anything can happen!

We already knew Yamaha's Chad Reed was going to at least make James sweat a bit in winning the title but after CR won the first round and James really couldn't catch him the whispers started. "[Insert whispering voice here] Chad has got something for James, Reedy's been training and is not going to settle for second anymore [end whispers]." At the second round in Phoenix, James won but Chad kept him very honest – even sticking a wheel in here and there at the start of the race. Sadly, we will never know what would've happened had James not gone and got his knee fixed. If I had to guess, I really believe that Speedy Reedy would've won more than the one race he did last year. He did look a little faster but ifs and buts and candy and nuts and all that crap comes into play here. But just like last season's MX series, some riders get a little friskier when they know the big dog isn't around. Namely Kevin Windham!

Last season when KW won the last outdoor national of the year I thought there was a 50/50 chance that we might not see the big #14 back out on the track. His contract was up and he had done numerous interviews (including one with me) that suggested he was tiring of the grind of the AMA season. Then when word filtered out during the off-season that Honda took his works bike away, offered him half of his old money and that KW was shopping himself around, I figured the end was near. Windham rode a KTM for MDK and liked the bike by all reports but the team couldn't pay him what he wanted, Honda was standing firm and with all his money in the bank, why not just call it a career?

As we now know, KW took the Honda offer and his old team Factory Connection built him a real production-based CR450 with help from Pro Circuit. He still has full-on works forks and shock but his bike is about five or six pounds (I'm not sure how much 'stone' that is – figure it out yourself) heavier and a little down on power but KW would just ride out his SX-only contract and go gracefully into the sunset.

Or would he? Kevin Windham showed up at the first five rounds where he made the podium three times and would've made it again at Anaheim 3 if not for a flat front tyre. He was a new man! Who knew it took Honda embarrassing him by basically telling him that they didn't think he could beat their three riders to motivate KW again? He showed aggression, which if you talk to people around him was what he's been lacking for the last few years. I think that Stewart's injury affected him big time – KW knows that he has beaten Reed straight up before, why not go all out for the gold again?

So Reed's looking good and Windham is a new man but what about the other contenders and pretenders? Timmy Ferry is a contender. He got his customary third at round one and again at round five for his only two podiums so far. The other races he was really fast but suffered from some bad luck – a Tuffblock kicked in front of him at one round and a second turn crash claimed him in another. Can he win the title? It's doubtful but I would really like to see him win his first AMA SX race at least. He has the speed to be there every week but you notice how the SX champion almost never has a bad race? Well, Timmy has bad races every now and then and you can't do that and win championships.

I was his mechanic for four years and I remember in 2003 we were second in the motocross points (not really threatening for the title but it's story time)

and we went into Washougal and he crashed his way to 16-13 moto scores. How do you honestly have that kind of day and expect to be there at the end? And no, his bike never broke so shut up! Despite this, Timmy is a contender for a win and therefore the championship.

Andrew Short and Davi Millsaps are like the same rider – they are younger kids that are just getting the hang of this supercross thing. They both have bright futures and will be players in the near future. I think Davi has slightly more speed than Andrew but Andrew is the new Tim Ferry, just really consistent and always going to be there. Davi could win a race very easily, he just needs to get a programme together and stay with it. The guy has serious talent for sure. The top riders often stop and watch him in a difficult section to see what he does – he can really put the bike wherever he wants. Shorty and Millsaps are contenders.

Mike Alessi is a pretender. He is not going to win this year but with his phenomenal starting ability he will make life hard for the top guys. You know what else helps him? As he gets passed by the big guys every week, he can pick up a little speed secret here and there to help him get to the top. He is the only guy who's in his first year in the top 10 in points. That says something about him. He will change his pretender status in 2009.

Grant Langston is a pretender. He can't win and won't be a factor for the rest of the SX season. He's had two mechanical DNFs so far this season and missed one round with an eye problem. He really has only had one race where he showed anything and that was Anaheim 1 where he got fifth. He lacks the



David Vuillemin is a pretender this year but next year he could be a contender again...

precision in supercross and tends to lose focus at some point in the 20 laps. He will be there outdoors however so he just needs to get through SX healthy and then it's on for him. And 2009 will be another chance for GL8 to show that he can be a SX winner.

David Vuillemin is a pretender and that's a real shame. He is a buddy of mine and I know he was working very hard in the gym and on the track to be, as he called it, "2008's Tim Ferry". You know the whole lose a factory ride and get it back and be a contender thing? He wanted it bad and Suzuki gave him a bike and support that could do it. Unfortunately for DV12.com, he crashed at the Suzuki track during pre-season testing and really racked himself up. As of round five he was still feeling the effects of a thumb injury sustained in that crash. He also dislocated his knee in the mud of San Francisco and that bothered him for a while. He is a pretender in '08 but hopefully in '09 he will be back. I like DV and I've seen the raw talent he has, one of the most technical riders on the circuit.

So that's what I think but, hey, what do I know? Send me your thoughts at matthes@racerxcanada.com





TROUBLE-SHOOTING

WE ALL LOVE OUR MOTORCYCLES – THAT IS UNTIL THINGS GO WRONG – WHICH IS WHERE GODFREY WAKKER AND HIS TIP-TOP DIRT DIAGNOSIS FLOW CHARTS COME INTO PLAY...

Words by **Geoff Walker** Photo by **Sutty**

Bikes are great when they're running sweet but the moment they're not performing well the fun tends to dwindle a little.

Non-starting, ill-running and p**s-poor handling can all have a massive effect on our day at the track. What's about to follow is a guide to problem solving when things go wrong.

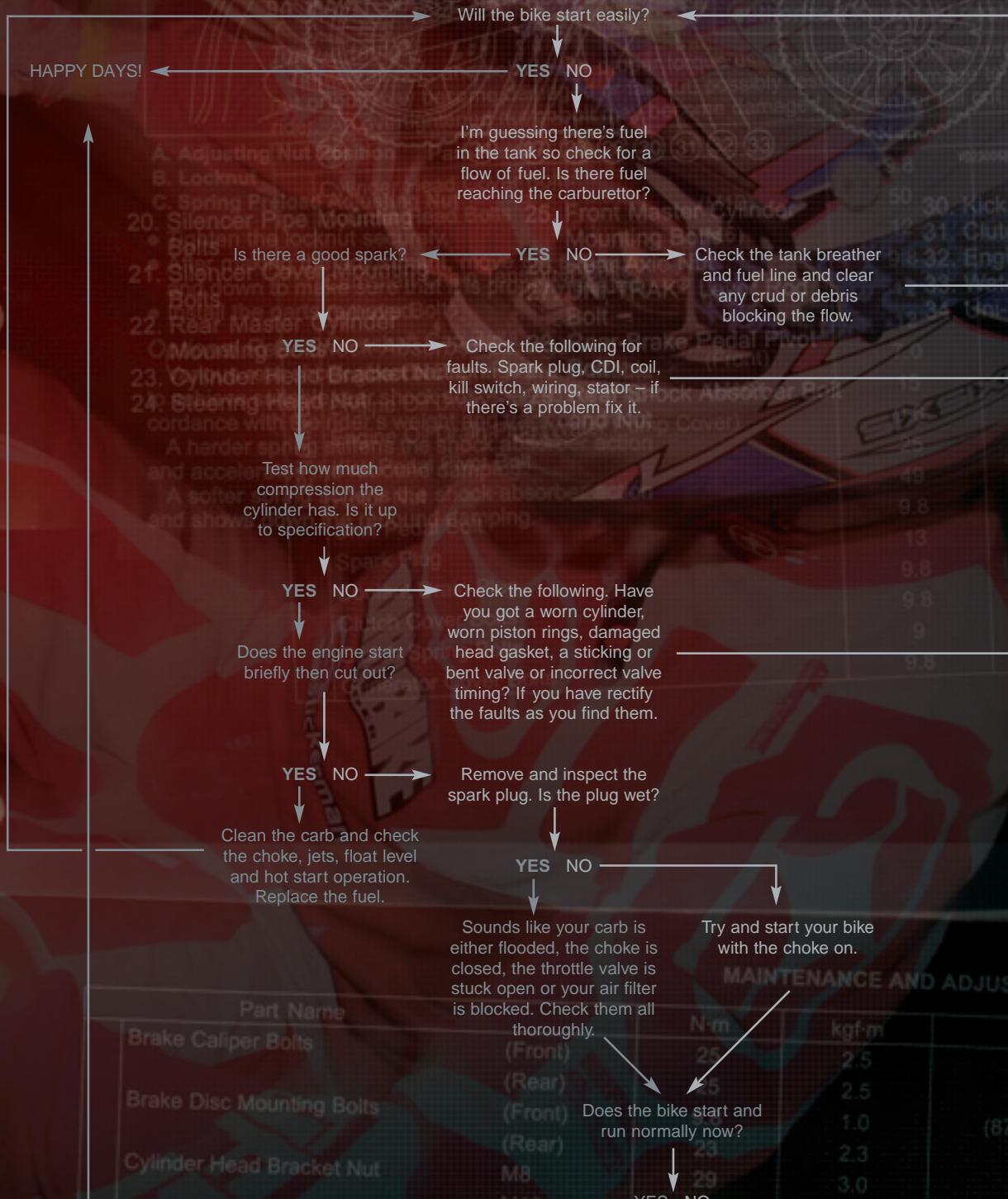
with your four-stroke or two-stroke.

These points are here to give you an insight into what could be troubling your beloved bike. Some are common and some are not so common but all are a possibility in the life of a dirt bike. In this first part we'll chart the problem which can occur in the motor department and

next month we'll look at suspension problems and ways to overcome them.

These points are a guide and if you are not up to the mechanical side of some of the checks then always work with the simplest solutions first before taking the bike to your dealer for the more complicated checks. **2.5**

WAKKA! MY BIKE WON'T START/ IS HARD TO START!



Part Name	is blocked. Check them all thoroughly.	N·m	kgf·m	ft·lb
Brake Caliper Bolts	(Front) (Rear)	25 25	2.5 2.5	18 18
Brake Disc Mounting Bolts	(Front) (Rear)	1.0 23	1.0 2.3	(87 in·lb) 17
Cylinder Head Bracket Nut	M8	29	3.0	22
	M10	59	5.0	36
Engine Mounting Bolts		59	5.0	36
Front Axle Nut		8.0	8.0	58
Front Axle Clamp Bolts		2.0	2.0	14
Front Fork Clamp Bolts		2.0	2.0	14
Silencer Bolts		21	2.1	15
Silencer Cover Bolts		12	1.2	(106 in·lb)
Front Fork Top Plug		29	3.0	22
Handlebar Clamp Bolts		25	2.5	18

WAKKA! I HAVE POOR PERFORMANCE AT LOW ENGINE SPEED AND MY BIKE WON'T IDLE...



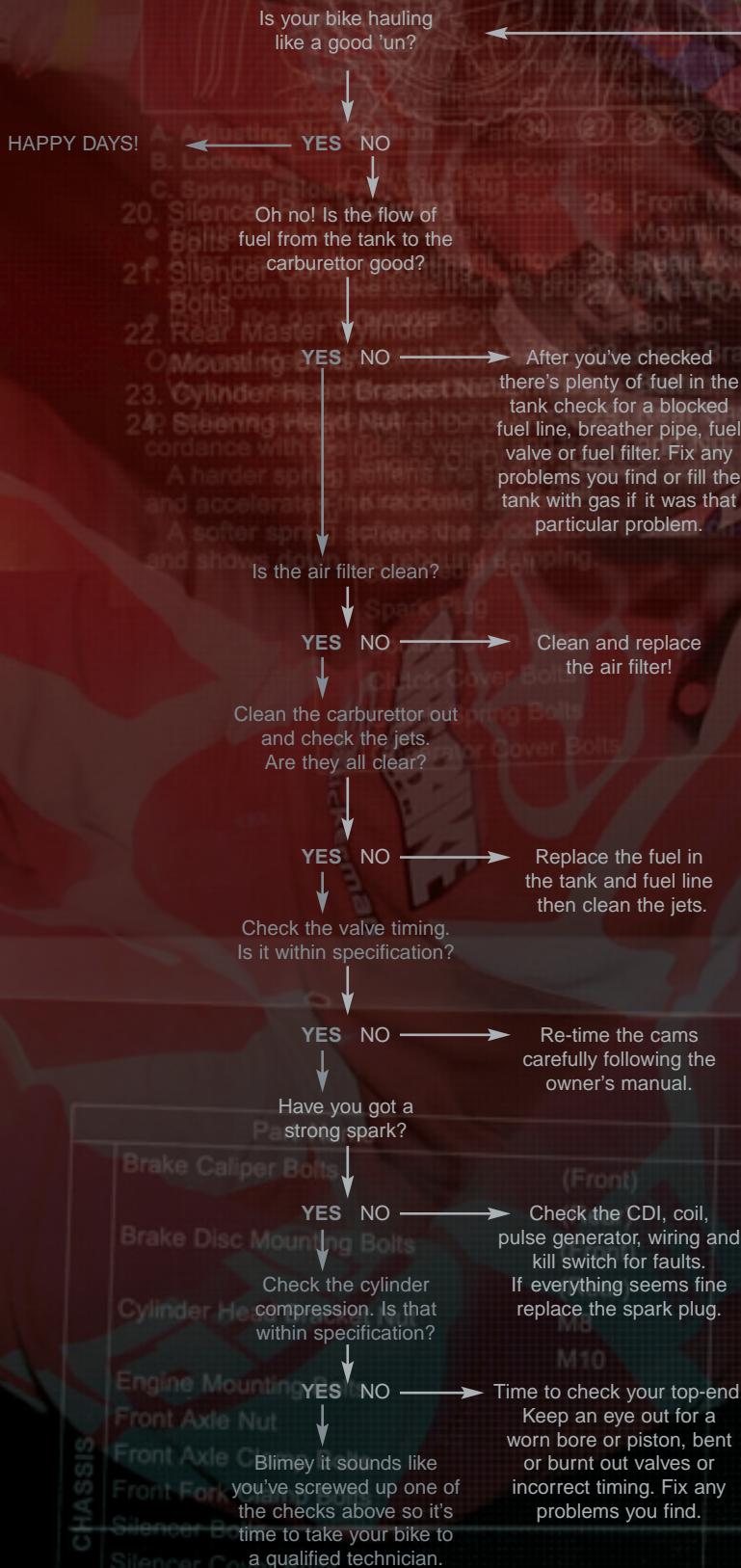
94 MAINTENANCE AND ADJUSTMENT

Torque table

Tighten all nuts and bolts to the torque specified in this table. An overtightened nut or bolt may become damaged or fall out, possibly resulting in damage to the motorcycle and injury to the rider. An overtightened nut or bolt may become damaged, broken, or fall out.

Part Name	Num	kgf-m	ft-lb
Cylinder Head Cover Bolts	9.8	1.0	(87 in-lb)
Cylinder Head Bolts	5.0	37	
Camshaft Chain Tensioner	1.2		(87 in-lb)
Cylinder Bolts	1.0		(7.2 in-lb)
Camshaft Cap Bolts	1.2		(106 in-lb)
Engine Oil Drain Plug (Front)	12	1.2	(106 in-lb)
Engine Oil Drain Plug (M10)	7.0	0.7	5.2
Engine Oil Drain Plug (M10)	15	1.5	11
Engine Oil Drain Plug (Water Pump Cover)	9.8	1.0	(87 in-lb)
Kick Pedal Pivot Bolt	25	2.5	18
	49	5.0	37

WAKKA! I HAVE POOR PERFORMANCE AT HIGH ENGINE SPEED!



MAINTENANCE AND ADJUSTMENT 95

	N·m	kgf·m	ft·lb
Brake Caliper Bolts	25	2.5	18
Brake Disc Mounting Bolts	25	2.5	18
Cylinder Head Bolts	9.8	1.0	(87 in·lb)
Engine Mounting Bolts	23	2.3	17
Front Axle Nut	29	3.0	22
Front Axle Cover Bolts	49	5.0	36
Silencer Bolts	49	5.0	36
Silencer Cover Bolts	79	8.0	58
Front Fork Top Plug	20	2.0	14
Handlebar Clamp Bolts	20	2.0	14
Swingarm Pivot Shaft Nut	21	2.1	15
	12	1.2	(106 in·lb)
	29	3.0	22
	25	2.5	18

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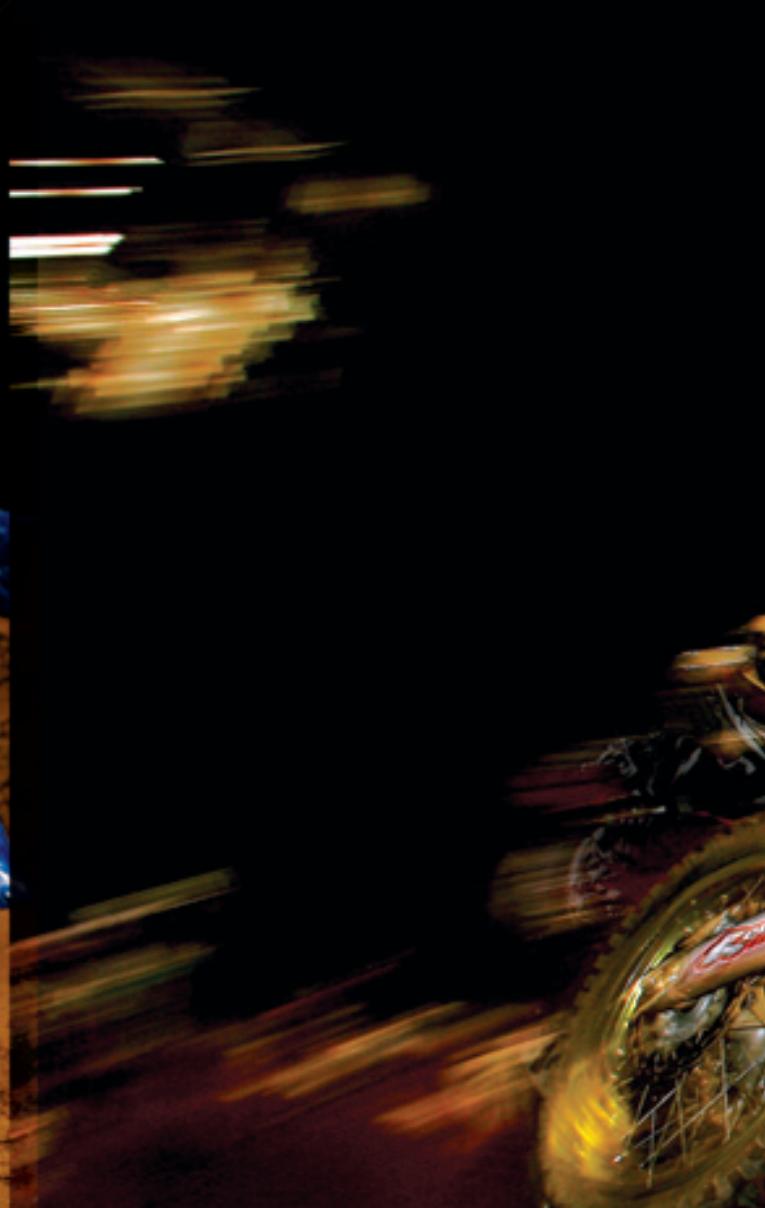
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Fast-starting, hard-charging Mike Brown dominates in Liverpool's Echo Arena



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Words by SEAN LAWLESS Photos by SUTTY



Lumberjack Lee Coutts scores well on Friday before a wrist injury sidelines him



Suso Suzuki's Carl Nunn uses the Liverpool races to blow away the winter cobwebs



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JSR steps on the gas



David Goosen leads Luke Remmer

The venue may be brand new but the same can't be said for the man who dominates rounds two and three of the Future West ACU British SX series at the swanky Liverpool Echo Arena in the city's famous Albert Docks.

Relatively speaking (if you take into account how old the planet Earth is) 'Downtown' Mike Brown's nowt but a twinkle in his daddy's eye. But at 35 years of age, with a Pro career stretching back to 1990, the American is the old man of the field. Not that he lets that slow him down – the British MX2 champ's been winning indoors all winter and his great run of form continues in the 2008 European City of Culture.

For their two-night stand in Liverpool, promoters Future West have shaken up the format with a series of one-lap, head-to-head 'death matches' filling in between the points-paying races and it's in Friday night's two-man shootout that Brownie suffers his only defeat of the weekend. Ashley Greedy – who earlier had knocked out Gordon Crockard – surprises his more seasoned opposition with a move up the inside into the second corner and then a ballsy brake-check at the end of the whoops to make sure of the win.

But when it comes to the Pro Open Main Event, Brownie leaves nothing to chance and he dominates to win from Canadian favourite Jean Sebastien Roy and South African Nev Bradshaw. Crockard gets fourth ahead of Canada's Lee Coutts and Greedy.

It's all going on at the start of the Pro Lites final with Carl Nunn's debut on the Suso Suzuki ending on the deck after a first turn pile-up that also pulls down Greedy and ends the holeshot hopes of Roy and compatriot Colton Facciotti.

With four of the big names struggling it's left to South African David Goosen to lead early on before he fades back through the pack leaving Canadian Kris Foster to take the win from Bradshaw and Per Kristian Bakke.

Saturday's SX goes off in front of a near-capacity crowd that's treated to another portion of Brown sauce with the man from Tennessee sweeping both the head-to-head races and the Pro Open Main Event.

Mike's razor-sharp reactions out the gate help make light work of the opposition and the Pro Open final's in the bag by the end of the rhythm section that follows the opening left-hander. Roy takes second from ironman Gordon Crockard who's spent his afternoon competing at The Tough One. And after two hours of extreme enduro action the Crock Star's still got enough in the tank to hold off a charging Facciotti who closes dramatically in the final laps.

Victory in the Lites goes to Facciotti from Bradshaw with Roy third ahead of Nunny, Bakke and Greedy.



The Crock Star's on the receiving end of a block pass by Ashley Greedy in Friday's one-to-ones



Canadian Colton Facciotti enjoys another successful trip to the UK



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Nev Bradshaw gets a faceful of roost



Kris Foster tastes Lites glory on the Friday night



Stuart Edmonds sticks his TM in the points



It's all about having fun and keeping sharp for Crockard

QUOTE UNQUOTE

MIKE BROWN >>

"I've got all the starts this weekend and I've had fun racing here. The guys are good, the track's technical. I've been racing all winter and it'll be good coming into the season in a few weeks and I hope to have the edge on everybody. I feel good. I'll keep racing as long as I keep riding like this and having fun."

CARL NUNN >>

"The track was really difficult I thought. The back sides of the landings were really sharp – it was almost like the jumps were the wrong way round but there was obviously a reason for it – so it was difficult getting the timing right and it was taking energy out of you when you got it wrong because it was a hard landing. I didn't expect to win, I just wanted to get racing early. Get rid of some cobwebs I've built up during the winter."

GORDON CROCKARD >>

"I was okay. I found it real hard at the start – it's such a short start straight – but the supercross was great. It was just nice to get on the podium. I would have loved to have got away and had a run at the front but at the end of the day I don't want to hurt myself because this GNCC opportunity is my priority."

"I love doing these for the fun – it's great to be able to do them and keep your finger on the pulse. I think it's healthy too for sharpness so I like doing them and I loved it tonight. All-in-all for a first time in Liverpool it was a great event. It's a lovely venue and there was a healthy crowd tonight. If this could be an annual fixture it would be great."

SERIES STANDINGS

PRO OPEN >>

1	Mike Brown	72 points
2	Jean Sebastien Roy	59
3	Ashley Greedy	42
4	Gordon Crockard	38
5	Colton Facciotti	38
6	Neville Bradshaw	33

PRO LITE >>

1	Colton Facciotti	61 points
2	Jean Sebastien Roy	58
3	Neville Bradshaw	44
4	Ashley Greedy	43
5	Kris Foster	39
6	Per Kristian Bakke	36

CLUBMEN OPEN >>

1	Mark Atkinson	58 points
2	Danny Blakely	50
3	Carl Jones	47
4	Peter Eccles	46
5	Alex Hornsby	44
6	Jonathan Smith	35

CLUBMEN LITES >>

1	Carl Jones	65 points
2	Harry Bertram	40
3	Vincent Crossard	38
4	Luke Kennet	35
5	Ryan Pottenger	32
6	Ryan Gregory	31



For more of Sutty's Liverpool SX shots check out the gallery at www.dirtbikerider.co.uk

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The image features the MotoSkinz logo at the top, which consists of the word 'MOTOSKINZ' in a stylized font with 'MOTOS' in black and 'SKINZ' in red, all contained within a black oval. Below the logo is a photograph of a red and white dirt bike, specifically a CRF 250/450 model, shown from a front three-quarter angle.

The image is a promotional graphic for Lazy Days. It features a large, stylized green '1' with the text 'UK No.' to its left. Below this is the word 'LAZY' in a bold, blocky font and 'DAYS' in a larger, more rounded font. To the right of the main logo, there is a vertical column of logos: 'SEM UNITED KINGDOM' in blue and yellow, 'Dethleffs' in red, and 'GEIST' in black with a circular logo. Below the main logo, the text 'RV/MOTORHOMES' is in red, 'FOR IMPORT/EXPORT & RETAIL' is in black, and 'NEW & USED SALES' and 'A Company Built on Reputation' are in black. At the bottom, the text 'OVER 400 NEW & USED ALWAYS IN' is partially visible.

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DEVON DEMON WILL WORDEN EYES UP
A SWITCH TO FOUR-POPPER POWER





Rowan Hill holds fourth
in the 125cc division



Auto ace
Jamie Clark



Daniel Clark takes
the chequers

MERSEYBEAT!

THE BRAND-NEW ECHO ARENA SEES TWO NIGHTS OF BRUTAL BAR-TO-BAR RACING AS THE FWSX SERIES HITS LIVERPOOL...

Words and photos by Fergus O'Dreyfus

There's plenty of bar-to-bar battling and brutal block passing in Liverpool's brand-new Echo Arena as the second and third rounds of the Future West British supercross championship take place in the city made famous by Mel C, Ken Dodd, Cilla Black and The Beatles. With plenty of points waiting to be paid out – and we all know points make prizes – it's no surprise that the racing is frighteningly fast and fearless.

Alfie Mountfort and Tommy Schofield trade wins in the Auto class with Schofield sliding to the front of the championship thanks to his three-out-of-three podium places in this winter's series so far. Round one winner Jamie Clark sits second in the championship chase after slipping off while battling for the win in an epic Friday night scrap!

Alfie Bowtell, Scooter Webster and

brand-new series leader Tom Neale hog the podium in the 65cc class with Alfie and Scooter taking a win apiece while Tom's second and third place finishes leave the KTM star one point ahead of Alfie with just one round in London's O2 Arena left to run.

Daniel Clark proves that consistency pays dividends in the Small-Wheel 85cc division by pulling together a pair of runner-up places that go nicely with a second spot scored in Sheffield to help him nail down the series lead. Suzuki rider James Dunn goes 1-3 over the weekend and sits second in the series on 65 points – just one behind Daniel's total of 66.

The Big-Wheel 85 class is all about quality and not quantity as although there are only five riders in Friday's Main and six in Saturday's, frequent lead changes and a crash or two keep the crowd on the edge of their seats.

Series newcomer Dex Wharton goes 2-1 over the weekend to stand out as the dominant force although it's fellow Suzuki star Ross Clarke whose 1-2 scorecard gives him a commanding lead in the series. Second is still wide open as Luke Norris and Ben Reed swap thirds and fourths with Norris just edging clear of Speedy Reedy by two points in the championship chase.

There's just no way that Norway's Per Kristian Bakke will be beaten in Liverpool as the 18-year-old Yamaha star does the double in the Echo Arena. Lewis King's championship aspirations take a shoeing as a second-night slip up sees the TM rider finish a lowly seventh in Saturday's brutal encounter. Now nine points back from the Norwegian rider it's gonna take something super special to happen in the O2 Arena for King to claim the FWSX crown – we'll keep you posted!



Norwegian Per Kristan Bakke leads the 125s with one round to go



Alfie Bowtell's a single point off the 65cc lead

SERIES STANDINGS

AUTOS

1 Tommy Schofield 65 points, 2 Jamie Clark 63, 3 Alfie Mountfort 58, 4 Harry Wichman 47, 5 Keenan Hird 44, 6 Elliot Phillips 43

65cc

1 Tom Neal 64 points, 2 Alfie Bowtell 63, 3 Scooter Webster 58, 4 Gradie Featherstone 40, 5 Josh Coleman 38, 6 Sid Evans 38

SMALL-WHEEL 85cc

1 Daniel Clark 66, 2 James Dunn 65, 3 Harry Brady 47, 4 Brady Ward 46, 5 Michael Eccles 43, 6 Ben Howell 41

BIG-WHEEL 85cc

1 Ross Clarke 63, 2 Luke Norris 58, 3 Ben Reed 56, 4 Dex Wharton 47, 5 Josh Hart 32, 6 Max Anstie 25

YOUTH 125cc

1 Per Kristan Bakke 70, 2 Lewis King 61, 3 Ryan Pottenger 47, 4 Rowan Hill 42, 5 Sean Winter 33, 6 Daniel Perry 32

MAX ANSTIE!

WITH HIS BROKEN SHOULDER ALL HEALED UP, OUR FAVOURITE COPPER-TOP IS BACK TO HIS WINNING WAYS...

Wow, did you know that I have been writing for DBR now for a year? It feels like this is my first column! I'm sitting over here in sunny California, thinking about all you lucky people back at home wishing you were here riding. Well I think when all our European friends came over they bought the weather with them as the last month hasn't actually been that nice. Obviously it's been better than at home but still it's not what California is used to.

My arm has finally got better and my friend's dad bought us two brand new 2008 KLX110s so we made ourselves a pit bike track. We built this massive 60ft step-up for them but haven't been brave enough to jump it yet. We figured that because we have only had the bikes for little over a week we would either break them or ourselves – or maybe both! So we are going to wait a little.

We then decided to do a fun race to get my arm loosened up at one of the best motocross tracks in the world – Glen Helen. With it being the last race of the year it attracted many of the national riders. We had some of our Dutch friends over for training so it was nice for them to go to such a great track. It was funny because all the Americans were complaining. In Holland there is a 65cc big wheel class and in the US there isn't. So our guys were running big wheels in the 65cc class and also raced the Superminis where you can have up to a 112cc.

This race also had a little extra to offer... On Saturday we had a 45-minute enduro and then a team race to earn double points. Then Sunday there were races on the motocross track. In the team event I was with my new big brother, 'J-Bomb' Jordan Booker.

The enduro got under way with a flag start – you had to have your left hand on your helmet when the flag dropped so my chosen technique was a kick into first gear with no clutch required. It wrecks the gearbox but it worked and I was out in front going into the back section when an eager Everett Holcomb tried to come around me, causing me to move over on him which caused us both to go smashing down the hill head first! Luckily for him he landed at the bottom facing the right way so he could get a little gap and enjoy the faint taste of victory. But with two laps to go he hit a nice big rock and got a puncture, leaving the door wide open for me to take the chequers.

For the team event J-Bomb started first on his new 144 machine – and got smoked out the gate by a 105cc (he claimed to have hit neutral but that was just a cover story for an angry dad). After his 10-minute lap and a speedy band change I was out chasing down Holcomb again (don't you always find that when you are rivals with someone you seem to always get together

on the track?). After an electric lap and a last corner smash up between me and Holcomb Jordan was out there gimping again. This time he had to make my life hard...he gooned it in one of the deep ruts to find himself upside down under the amazing KTM 144cc. Once he had been unsquashed and came back to me I had to work double hard to pull it all together for an outstanding fourth place! To be fair Jordan had only just flown in from England and was feeling a bit rough so he did a great job (and he's being really cool about being my new big brother).

The following day we hit the main circuit for practice at 7.30am (too early!) and the track was mint. It was going to be my first race back from my broken shoulder blade. Our new start technique was working well which enabled me to get the early lead. I had a bit of a battle with this Honda guy who I have never heard of until he went down and gifted me the first race.

Another good start allowed me to get the early lead in the second race and made things pretty easy for me – with these three-lap dashes the start is 90 per cent of the race. Of course, my shiny orange machine was talking to me around the track telling me how many championships she wants to win (she's special). Race three

wasn't the best for me and I came home second (well, I had to let them have one race didn't I or else they might think I was being mean) but I made up for it in race four. "And that flyin' orange machine of Anstie is out in front" and that's how it stayed!

I'm in a particularly good mood today seeing that it's the New Year and can see in my mind all the big trophies awaiting! Ha ha! If any of you would like to come out to do this event next year we'll be setting up a camp for Brits who want to come and ride, live and race like a pro. All the details will be on my website soon. It has taken a little longer than expected to sort everything out but it will be done. In nice bright orange!

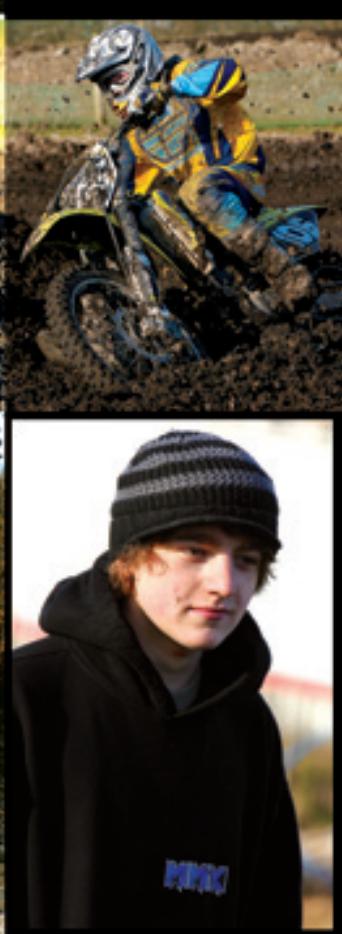
Soon after the event we had some guys come in from Denmark to stay with us. Some of you may have heard of Rasmus Jorgensen? He's racing the European championship this year on a 250F. Also the guys from motocrossplanet came over to do some filming which was cool.

I also went to Anaheim 1 and met up with Tommy Searle and Jamie Dobb. It was great to see the pros in action at the first AMA SX – to think, in three years I will be racing there! Feels weird. After A1 Tommy came to our compound to do some training and on Jamie's birthday we all went out karting which was awesome – even though I wasn't very good.

That's about it for this month, just getting ready for the nationals in March. Hope you all had a great New Year!



Max
dirtbikerider 117



RKOK!

THE BSMA NATIONALS #4 REV'S UP FOR MUCH, MUCH MORE SUCCESS IN 2008...

Words and photos by still-mx.co.uk

With brand-new rules and regulations put in place for the CCM-sponsored MMX Under-21 championship things have been made far easier for more riders to take part in the series. One rider who'll be taking advantage of these rule changes is 16-year-old Ross Keyworth who finished a fine fourth in the BSMA Nationals in '07. We hooked up with the Somerset speedster to see what's in store this year for RK...

Rage: How did last season go for you?
RK: "It went really well, I managed to come fourth in the BSMA nationals – which should have been a second if it wasn't for problems with the bike and a few small injuries. Other than that it went pretty well."

Rage: How are the preparations going for the new season, have you had much chance to get out on the four-stroke?

RK: "Well with the weather at the moment it's really hard to be able to get out and ride but I did manage a few weekends down at Matchams and they went pretty well. My training this year is intense so I should be in good shape for the new season."

Rage: You have spent the whole of your career so far on two-stroke bikes, what differences are you finding in riding the four-stroke?

RK: "I have been on the two-strokes for 11 years now and riding the four-stroke is a new challenge. The whole approach to my riding has had to change – before I used to be a huge clutch rider, now I have to try and not use it as much and use the power of the bike more. Also I feel the weight difference a lot as well."

Rage: So you're not tempted to keep the two-stroke dream alive and go for the now race-legal 144cc smoker?

RK: "That was the original plan but you see too many getting pushed through the finish line and I

fancied a change so we went for the 250F option."

Rage: What colour bike should we expect to see you on this year?

RK: "Well I've tried a Kawasaki but I didn't feel at home on that and because my sponsor has Suzukis I ended up riding them and really enjoying it. I've decided that the Suzuki is the bike I'll be on this year."

Rage: There are some seriously fast riders that compete in the Under-21 championship – how do you think it's gonna go?

RK: "Well I just want to try and qualify and get as many top-20 results as possible – the field is stacked out with huge talent so it will be hard. I also just hope it should bring on my speed as well, some of the riders also take part in the Maxxis British championships so it will be a good gauge of what is needed to run with the best of them."

Rage: What else will we be seeing you taking part in this year?

RK: "I will be riding in the Elite Open class and doing the odd BSMA round as well but I will probably just go wherever to be honest. A weekend without racing is a weekend wasted!"

Rage: Who helps Ross Keyworth stay in the saddle and make it to the start gate come race day?

RK: "My dad and granddads have always been there for me over the years – that has helped me hugely and I would not be where I am now without them. Over the past two years I have been sponsored by MMX (Miles MX) run by Rob, Shaun and Diane and week-in, week-out they have my bikes running awesome and they help me out with training so I owe them a thanks as well. Other help has come from Dave at Apico, Jack at Jax Moto, Mark at Fro Systems and Ryan and Lewis at Dare Decals."

HANDYANDY!

NORTHERN IRISH RIPPER ANDY REID SWITCHES TO SLICKS

Words by Mike Gurney

Andy Reid kicked off last year's motocross season in the best possible way by taking a storming double race win and overall victory at Desertmartin in the SW85cc class at the opening round of the BYMX series. This year however sees a complete change for Andy as he ditches the knobbies and pulls on a pair of slicks to go short circuit racing.

Andy's always been a fan of circuit racing and after a scintillating test day late last year he felt it was an opportunity he could not resist. So, just a few weeks short of his 14th birthday, Andy will be throwing a leg over a 125cc RS Aprilia at a Mallory Park pre-launch test day in preparation for the upcoming Superteen championship series for 12 to 19-year-olds and Nitro Newcomers cup.

With most of his sponsors still on board from last year it's a big thanks to P&O Irish Ferries, BMK, Duro Graphics and WD40. And with added help from the Longshot Racing team boss Harry Corbett and additional clothing help from Lloyds Lifestyle and Arca, the transition has been made a little easier for his rookie season.

On his days off and if time permits Andy still intends to keep his hand in on the motocross bike and may well still get stuck into any local opposition at home in Northern Ireland. All at Rage wish you the best of luck Andy...

JETSETWILLY!

WILL WORDEN'S FIRED UP FOR A FANTASTIC '08 SEASON

Words and photo by Mike Gurney



One of the mainstays of last year's 125cc two-stroke class was third-placed BYMX finisher 17-year-old Will Worden. He may not have always grabbed the headlines but he was constantly in the thick of the action.

Will and his family hail from Ivybridge in Devon meaning they're a little geographically isolated and have become true long-distance travellers. The absolute highs and lows of last year's campaign came on two of longest trips with the total disappointment of the bike refusing to start on the line at Desertmartin and then the complete sugar rush Will enjoyed at Leuchars in Scotland as Will blitzed the opposition reveling in the deep sand of his favourite track – one of the best performances of the year for me and Will was on a real high!

For this year Will hopes to be out on a 250F KTM but if it's a return to a two-stroke supplied and tweaked by John Deacon Racing and with some extra support from Fox racing, Pro Clean and Talon, Will's pretty sure he can be competitive again in a class where by his own admission there could be 10 or more guys capable of winning a race at any time whether it be BYMX, Elite Youth Cup or MX2.



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PAC-A-MAC!

BILLY PACKS HIS TRAVEL BAGS AS HE SCOUTS FROM FRANCE TO BELGIUM AND THEN TO FLORIDA

FROM MY skiing trip to France I took a ***ty trip to Belgium before heading to sunny Florida. Things are flat-out right now in preparation for the season ahead but it's going really well this time around – no broken bones so far (touch wood)!

I've been out here a week and I haven't even thought of home once – I ain't missing it at all! While I was writing this I heard there's snow all over the UK at the moment. Rather you guys than me – I could get used to this American lifestyle.

The tracks here are lovely and you can ride for as long as you want for \$25 – that's like 12 pound 50!

There are no 20-minute sessions either and no big or small groups – everyone just goes out together and it works well. People in Britain are too scared it seems – it's like there are rules for breathing in Britain! You can't do anything there without getting into trouble – it ***ses me right off! Everyone should relax! William says RELAX!

Another thing I like out here is that you can pass in any lane! So when you have some woman in front of you in the outside lane doing 70mph you can undertake her at 120 – that's just perfect!

On my days off I have been getting all tourist and I've already been to Universal Studios, Sea World and Wet n' Wild! The last time I was at Wet n' Wild was like over 10 years ago – the place just looks miniature now. It's a bit of a let down because I was well excited about going again – I seem to remember the lazy river being massive but now I can get around it in under a minute! It sucks.

After we left Wet n' Wild we went to the sky diving simulator thingy with the big turbine – now that was cool! If only they had one of them at the gym because they're so good for core fitness!

The riding is going amazing too and the Honda is just feeling so awesome. I'm riding five days a week

and normally when I ride that much I get bored of it but every day I've been out has been a blast and I'm always learning something new. I'm out here with my mate Keith – he rides the TTs at home – and Prince Charming (Neil Prince).

I rode a 40-minute moto with my iPod on the other day and it was wicked! When I first started off I couldn't even hear the bike but sure enough the bumps and jumps made the ear phones come loose and all I had was an echo of Kings of Leon but it was still cool. Eventually though my iPod came loose and I had to pull over at the 35-minute mark to give it to Princey.

I told Bry about it on a text message and the reply I got was 'yeah well I've been on an hour-and-a-half cycle today with my iPod and all I could hear was wind and a bass line!' – I thought that was pretty funny.

I went to Disney yesterday and I got my picture taken with Goofy, Chip (or maybe Dale) and Woody from Toy Story! I wanted more but it seems they didn't want their pictures taken with me – just the kids.

Today I'm off to the Epcot Center because I'm a total geek for space stuff – I love all that.

There are so many awesome cars over here and I love the pick-up trucks the most! Well

actually they are the only cool ones apart from the occasional Mustang – they're all fuel guzzling monsters and you will never find a 1.6 litre car over here that's for sure! The fuel prices are unreal – three dollars a gallon! A gallon is four-and-a-half litres and you get two dollars to every pound so you do the math – it's cheap like the budgie.

Sorry there aren't more funny stories but it's all work, work, work at the moment. Check out my Myspace for pictures – www.myspace.com/billymac211



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